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# THE AMERICAN I M A G O

VOL. 13

SPRING  
1956

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*A Psychoanalytic Journal  
for the Arts and Sciences*

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# Morphology of a Symbol: The Octopus★

by

Jacques Schnier

In the second volume of his biography of Freud, Ernest Jones comments that as early as 1910 he had suggested to Freud that a collected study of symbolism be instituted. The latter was pleased with the idea and a committee was appointed for the purpose. Although little came of this later, Jones still considers that much could be learned from such a comparative study from all sources, art, myths, folklore, dreams and so on, so as to ascertain the precise points of resemblance on which symbols are constructed. (11a, p. 68)

The value of symbols for psychoanalysis, as Anna Freud has expressed it, is that they provide universally valid relations between particular id-contents and specific ideas of words or objects. The knowledge of these relations, enables us to draw reliable inferences from conscious manifestations such as works of arts, folklore, mythology, the personal fantasies and dreams of analyzands, etc., as to the unconscious material behind them, without first laboriously going through the investigative process of reversing the measures which the ego has adopted in its defense. The technique of translating symbols is thus a shortcut to understanding, or a way of plunging from the highest strata of consciousness to the lowest strata of the unconscious without pausing at the intermediate strata of former ego-activities which may in time past have forced a particular id-element to assume a specific ego form. The knowledge of the language of symbols has the same sort of value for the understanding of the id as mathematical formulae have for the solution of typical

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\*Amplified from a paper read before the Psychoanalytic Education Society, of San Francisco, January 12, 1952, and the American School of Classical Studies, Athens, Greece, March 1, 1955.

problems. Such formulae are used constantly with demonstrable advantage. From a practical point of view it does not matter if one is ignorant of the way they were originally arrived at. (8a, p. 16)

However, we must not overlook the fact that formulae, though they help to solve problems, do not actually extend our understanding of mathematics. In the same way, by directly translating a symbol in a specific context we may uncover the id-contents without really gaining any deeper psychological understanding of the factors which produced it, or of the individual or the culture who uses it. It is for this reason that the investigation of how specific symbols are constructed and how single or multiple id-meanings are assigned to them is of such great importance.

The following study of the octopus symbol was first inspired by its appearance in the associations of analyzands and also by a Japanese wood-block print by Kuniyosi (1791-1861). This print, (Plate I) a gift from a friend, depicts a monstrous octopus rearing the hulk of its enormous head out of the ocean. Drenched with spray and moving as if in procession before this huge monster is a host of lesser sea-folk — the lobster, squid, clam, oyster, abalone, and innumerable species of fish both large and small. Immediately in front of the octopus and occupying the central point in this procession is an immense crab with upraised claws in which is clasped a large sheathed samuri sword.

That the octopus is not an uncommon motif in Japanese thought was readily attested to by one of my colleagues, Professor Susumu Nakamura. From him I also learned that one of the most common Japanese objects on which this motif appears is the hanging curtain or screen at the entrance to bars and restaurants. In other instances, also connected with drinking and eating places, it is depicted in drawings or on menus, dancing merrily and drunkenly while waving a fan. But behind this jolly characterization exists ambivalent features, for, alongside its association with drunkenness and merriment, the octopus, in the Japanese mind is

related with overpowering hatred. An infuriated person is referred to as being "angry as an octopus."

Another of the many culture areas in which the octopus motif is found is that of pre-columbian Peru. Here, in coastal archeological sites, many clay pots and jars have been found exquisitely decorated with designs based on the octopus. On some examples, the motif is applied in the form of drawing or painting; on others, it is modeled on the surface in three-dimensions or low-relief. On a number of these container forms, as for example, two of the jars in the Museum of Anthropology, at the University of California, at Berkeley, the octopus is depicted with a demon-like anthropomorphic head which is completely alien to the actual head structure of the animal. The possible symbolic significance of this type of presentation will be referred to later when studying the unconscious meaning of the octopus.

#### MINOAN AND MYCENAEN OCTOPUS MOTIF

Of all cultures in which the octopus motif appears, however, none used it more frequently or as inventively as the Minoans and the Mycenaens. For hundreds of years, long before the beginning of the Christian era, no other motif was as popular with the potters of Crete and Argolis as the undulating eight-armed animal whose shape provided almost unlimited design variations for the rounded surface of their pots. Through the systematic excavations of the Palace of Knossos by Sir Arthur Evans (6), and the Mycenae acropolis by Blegen (2) and others, innumerable examples of cups, jars, pots, and amphora, decorated with the octopus design have been uncovered. At other sites on Crete,—at Palai-kastro, Zakra, Gournia—on the Greek mainland, on Rhodes, Cyprus, and eastern Mediterranean coastal sites additional pots and other objects similarly decorated have been found. No doubt, during early times, as today, this animal represented a principal item of food for the population. But because of its shape and specific characteristics it also came to be unconsciously associated with a certain group of repressed

feelings and thus became a popular art symbol for these unconscious thoughts.

Because the octopus was so inextricably bound up for hundreds of years with Minoan and Mycenaean culture, one is tempted to fathom its unconscious significance for these early Mediterranean inhabitants. But, unfortunately, we have no literary associations from early time; we have no myths, no folklore, nor fairy-tales to provide the verbal associations for interpreting or for substantiating any interpretation we might make. It would be a simple matter for us in this situation to use the comparative method and, on the basis of similarities, attribute to the Mycenaean octopus symbol, the same unconscious significance as that which we uncover in the octopus symbol of later cultures or our own analyzands. But no matter to what extent we may individually be convinced of the universality of unconscious thinking processes in human beings, with their corresponding similarity in the method of selecting and employing symbols, the modern anthropologist, art historian, and sociologist take exception to this point of view. Their claim is that scientifically it is incorrect to interpret ancient man's thinking processes on the basis of the thinking processes observable in modern man. Since ancient man is no longer available for verifying our interpretations, many anthropologists and sociologists are prone to consider any symbolic explanation of his art and institutions, no matter how convincing they appear, as mere speculation.

There is, however, at least one feature connected with the octopus design of the Minoans and Mycenaeans which is highly significant for anthropological investigation from a psychoanalytic point of view. Extensive research indicates that it had a developmental history during which it passed through a series of structural changes. Careful study of these changes discloses certain striking associated ideas which are of great value for deciphering symbolic content. Archeological study of the design shows that starting with an altogether realistic and rhythmic rendering, it tended more and more towards stylization and abstraction until the

latest designs, on casual glance, seem to bear no resemblance to the actual physical appearance of the octopus. An early or realistic version as seen on a pot from Gournia (plate II, fig. 1), or on examples from the Mycenaean II A period (see Fururmark's chart, plate III), show the octopus in a natural position with its head uppermost. Its tentacles, spotted with suckers, stream out and up from the bottom of the head mass and gracefully undulate here and there over the surface of the pot. In later versions (see Mycenaean II B examples) the natural position of the octopus has been reversed; the head is now at the bottom of the design with the tentacles streaming out from the top of the form. In even later versions, (Mycenaean III A: 2, early) the head has more and more become an elongated mass with major emphasis on the two round eyes and long drawn-out top-knob which in the inverted position takes on the appearance of a long nose. The tentacles have become thinner and without suckers, thus strongly suggesting strands of hair.

In a great number of the very latest designs, as for example, on pots of the Mycenaean III A: 2 late period, and on the great jar in the Candia Museum (plate II, fig 2), there can be no question that the artist now associates the octopus with a monstrous head featuring two large eyes and an exaggerated bulbous nose. The tentacles or arms are represented as snakelike strands of hair streaming from the head and the whole appearance is that of a gruesome female demon. Even in its last and most disintegrated form, (Mycenaean III C types), the two large eyes, the long pendant nose and the streaming locks of hair are retained.

As Freud very early pointed out, the myths, legends and art products of a group or nation express unconscious wishes, fears, or defenses against these fears, common to its members. These expressions of the unconscious could not long survive if they did not reflect a general group tendency. As manifestations of unconscious thoughts they correspond to the personal fantasy, art or dream life of an individual.

Now we know that the changes, substitutions or corrections that take place in the retelling of a personal fantasy or

dream, or in the use of a specific art motif, are in the nature of associated ideas and are, therefore, meaningful indicators of repressed thoughts. We can, therefore, think of the changes and revisions through which a given national myth, art motif, or fantasy progresses, as in the nature of a series of associated thoughts or associated designs of the group extended in time, and, thus, of great value in revealing unconscious content.

### OCTOPUS MYTHS AND FANTASIES

Before proceeding to investigate the symbolic significance of the Mycenaean octopus, as well as the symbolism of the octopus in other contexts, let us briefly consider the historical fantasies concerning this animal. Ancient as well as modern writers have created many stories about the octopus and its close relatives, the squid and cuttlefish. But on examining the literature of different periods one finds myth and fancy so wonderfully intertwined with a basis of facts that even the experienced naturalist would probably find it difficult to pass judgment on what is fact and what is fancy.

Although many stories emphasizing the size of the cephalopod are gross exaggerations, others do appear to be founded on actual observation. A writer, who, for many years shipped before the mast, describes the harpooning and capture of a sperm whale. In dying, the whale ejected the contents of its stomach which appeared to contain the portion of an enormous fish, bitten off to enable the whale to swallow it. Upon closer examination this piece was found to be a massive fragment of a cuttlefish—a tentacle or arm—as thick as a stout man's body, and with six or seven sucking discs on it. (3, p. 78) Some idea of the overall size of the cuttlefish to which such a tentacle fragment might belong is conveyed by the data on the octopus tanks at the Steinhart Aquarium in San Francisco, which states that these animals grow to a maximum of fifty to sixty feet and a weight of thirty tons.

Even though we accept the dimensions recorded by eye witnesses some of the descriptions of octopuses by more lit-



erary minded observers and writers have obviously been embroidered by the imagination and must be classified as sheer fantasies. For example, Denys de Montefort, a French scientist in his book on the *Natural History of Mollusks*, refers to a colossal cephalopod which he illustrates with a drawing showing a huge octopus throwing its arms over a three-masted vessel, snapping off its masts, tearing down the yards and at the point of dragging it to the bottom. The theme of his illustration is taken from a painting in the chapel of St. Thomas in the French seaport of St. Malo which is based on an event said to have actually happened off the coast of West Africa. (13, p. 256).

Half a century before de Montefort, a Norwegian Bishop, Pontippidian, in his *Natural History of Norway* (1754) wrote that, "a fleet of ships while at sea sighted an island where no island should be, and determining to explore this strange land, anchored their vessels and landed. Suddenly to their horror, there arose around the island a multitude of serpent arms taller than the masts of the vessels, which embraced the ships and collected the crew, until, with a horrible whirling of the whole ocean, island, ships and men disappeared forever." (3, p. 138) This creature was evidently the Kraken of old Norse legends fashioned after an octopus prototype; at least, this is the usually accepted interpretation of it. The additional assertion that the Kraken darkened the water around it by an excretion further supports this explanation. (5) In the Orient there also exists an exaggerated idea of the size of the octopus and the power of these animals to sink a ship and devour its crew. An English resident of China states that he had seen in a shop "a picture of a cuttle fish embracing a junk, apparently of about 300 tons weight, and helping itself to the sailors as one picks gooseberries off a bush." (12, p. 106) Of a size comparable to the Kraken of Norse mythology is the octopus fantasied by the script writer of a proposed Hollywood film entitled, "The Monster Beneath the Sea". The plot is woven about a "Frankenstein type Octopus which seizes a U. S. Navy submarine; crushes it, sinks a ship, kills human beings,

and, as a climax, clasps and completely destroys the Golden Gate Bridge [the longest suspension bridge in the world] and creates panic and terror in San Francisco."\*

All reports to the contrary, however, the octopus appears to be a harmless, indifferent, easily frightened fellow. Jacques Y. Cousteau, who, for many years has explored the mysterious depths of the sea with the aqua-lung, gives eye-witness accounts of meetings between octopus and man. Frequently while moving under water he saw octopuses on the sea floor clinging to reefs. Anxious to test the common belief in the animal's savagery, his companion, Dumas, on one occasion, took the initiative and pulled an octopus from a cliff. "If Dumas was timid, the octopus was downright terrorized. It writhed desperately to escape the four-armed monster, and succeeded in breaking loose. . . . Soon we were handling any size of cephalopod we found. Dumas became a sort of dancing instructor to the devilfish. He would select an unwilling pupil, hold it firmly and gently gyrate around inducing the creature to follow. The octopod used every trick to escape. The bashful animal usually refused to fasten its suction cups to flesh. Dumas tried to wrap the tentacle around his bare arm, in the familiar blood-drinking position but without success. The octopus would not retain his grip. Dumas forced the suction cups against his arm and succeeded in obtaining a brief adhesion, quite easy to remove." (4, p. 20)

In mythology as in art we find audacious liberties taken in depicting the octopus as well as other animals—insects turned to giants and humans reduced to mites. According to the Samoan myth of creation, the earth originated in a geneological series of rocks or cliffs, from which at length arose the octopus, whose children were fire and water. Later, the sea was formed as a result of the bursting of the ink sac of this primeval animal. (15)

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\*From the San Francisco Chronicle, September 11, 1954



## ASSOCIATED SYMBOLS

In addition to the emphasis on gigantic size another feature found in literary works is the association of the octopus with a number of undisputably mythological or fantasy figures. For example Victor Hugo writes, "It is difficult for those who have not seen it to believe in the existence of the devilish (English synonym for octopus). Compared to this creature, the ancient Hydras are insignificant." (10, p. 122) In another instance Hugo actually refers to the octopus as a Hydra. Now the Hydra of Greek mythology was a gigantic monster with nine heads, the center one being immortal. It haunted the marsh of Lerna in Peloponnesus until it was destroyed by Heracles as one of his twelve labours. When attacking it, he found that as soon as one head was cut off two grew up in its place. Finally he burnt out the roots with firebrands, and at last severed the immortal head from the body and buried it under a mighty block of rock. The arrows dipped in the poisonous blood or gall of the monster were said to inflict fatal wounds. Because the octopus is really capable of rapidly developing anew a lost tentacle, an English naturalist is of the opinion that the idea of the many headed Hydra originated from knowledge of the octopus. In addition, the ancients attributed to the octopus a venomous secretion similar to the poisonous blood or gall attributed to the Hydra. (12, p. xv)

The many writhing tentacles and ghastly appearance of the octopus have reminded some authors of the terrifying female monster Gorgo, the Roarer. Gorgo, also known as Medusa, had a round face, an angry look, boar's tusks and any one who caught sight of her or was struck by the lightning from her eyes was petrified immediately. But perhaps the chief feature by which Gorgo was known was her locks of hair in the form of serpents. It is this feature that prompts comparison with the octopus. Thus, Bullen writes, "The sombre brown of its body, the pustular skin, the eyes in which a whole inferno of hatred of everything living seems to be concentrated, the palpitating orifice at the top of the

head, opening now and then, sufficiently to show the parrot-like beak common to all the race, these are grisly features, but the eight arms, writhing, curling, clinging like a Medusa's hair, are features of the octopus which hold the imagination captive." (3, p. 127)

Here I should like to insert a number of psychoanalytic interpretations of the Medusa head symbol as they parallel interpretations suggested by the symbol of the octopus. Briefly, this figure from Greek mythology is interpreted as a symbol of the fear-invoking characteristics of the female based primarily on the child's observation of the anatomical difference in sexual structure between male and female. Freud in his short note on *Medusa's Head* writes, "It is a remarkable fact that, however frightening they (the writhing snakes of her head) may be in themselves, they nevertheless serve actually as a mitigation of the horror, for they replace the penis, the absence of which is the cause of the horror." (8) Flügel reports the case of a woman who thought while combing her mother's hair that it was alive and that in some uncanny way was able to move itself as if it were, like Medusa's hair, a mass of serpents. Shortly before, while brushing the hair of an intimate friend, there occurred to her the idea that the hair was very like "a lot of little penises." (7, p. 156) Since associations point to some similarity in the unconscious meaning of things compared, it should not appear sheer conjecture to assign a similar interpretation to the octopus and catalog it with the Medusa head as another symbol of the infantile fear and, at the same time, resolution of this fear, stemming from the little boy's observation of the mother's body. Of this comparison, however, I shall have more to say later. That the Medusa head provides for a resolution of the fear is indicated by the cold beauty and attractiveness given it in Classical art, as for instance, the example in the Munich Glyptothek. (16, p. 328) In these sculptures the terrifying and repulsive representations of the head from earlier times give way to refined beauty. (7, p. 186)

A French tale from Lorraine in which a seven-headed

dragon and a witch are identical (17, p. 62) suggests that the multi-headed Hydra already referred to has a similar meaning as the Medusa head. The witch's long nose and broom are commonly found to be symbols of the fantasied penis.

Before delving deeper in quest of further interpretations let us examine other associations and contexts in which the octopus symbol occurs. In Victor Hugo's novel referred to above, the hero Gilliatt enters a cave in pursuit of a crab. Reaching after it into a fissure, he is suddenly sized by some strange monster which twists itself around his naked arm. Hugo's description of the ensuing battle between his hero and the monster is most vivid and highly colored by fantasy. "Gilliatt recoiled; but he had scarcely power to move! He was, as it were, nailed to the place. With his left hand. . . he supported himself against the rocks while he made a desperate effort to withdraw his arm. He succeeded in only disturbing his persecutor, which wound itself still tighter. A second form—sharp elongated and narrow—issued out of the crevice, like a tongue out of monstrous jaws. It seemed to lick his naked body. . . Then suddenly stretching out, it became longer and thinner, as it crept over his skin, and wound itself round him. At the same time a terrible sense of pain, comparable to nothing he had ever known, compelled all his muscles to contract. . . It seemed as if innumerable suckers had fastened to his flesh and were about to drink his blood. . . A third long undulating shape issued from the hole in the rock; seemed to feel its way about his body; lashed round his ribs like a cord, and fixed itself there. . . It was impossible to sever or tear away the slimy bands (now many in number) which were adhering by a number of points. Each of the points was the focus of frightful and singular pangs. It was as if *numberless small mouths were devouring him*\*\* at the same time. . . Suddenly a large, round, flattened, glutinous mass issued from beneath the crevice. . . In the middle of this slimy mass appeared two

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\*\*Italics not in original.

eyes. . . Gilliatt recognized it as an octopus." (10, p. 122)

Continuing his description of the octopus Hugo writes, "If terror were the object of its creation, nothing could be imagined more perfect than the devilfish. . . (it) has no muscular organization, no menacing cry, no breastplate, no horn, no dart, no claw, no tail with which to hold or bruise; no cutting fin, no poison, no talons, no teeth, yet it is of all creatures, the most formidably armed." He then asks, "What is the devilfish?" and provides his own answer, "It is the sea vampire." (10, p. 122-123)

Now the vampire, like the Medusa head is definitely a creature of the imagination. Belief in this fantastic figure is extremely widespread and there is probably no corner of the earth where it does not appear, in some form or other, in folk tales or superstitions. According to the Slavs, amongst whom, belief in the vampire is particularly firmly established, it is a soul or reanimated body of a deceased person who continues to live in the grave coming out at night to suck the warm blood of men and women while they are asleep. Thus it is nourished, maintained in good condition and preserved from decomposition. In his "Nightmare, Witches and Devils," Jones devotes an entire section to the vampire, in which he has collected a rich store of superstitions and sagas. Concerning this subject he writes, "None of the group of beliefs, here dealt with, is richer or more overdetermined than that of the vampire, nor is there one that has more numerous connections with other legends and superstitions." (11, p. 38)

The two characteristics of the Slavic Vampire, viz. 1) its origin in a dead person who it is feared will return from the grave to molest the living, and 2) its habit of sucking blood from living persons, usually with fatal effect, are also the principal features of vampire beliefs found in other parts of the world. If we investigate these two features, material is brought to light that is of considerable help in our attempts to understand the fantasies connected with that real, living animal, the octopus, with which the vampire has been compared. It is, however, the second characteristic of this

demon, namely, its blood-sucking propensity that is of special interest for us since this is also an outstanding feature in superstitions regarding the octopus. "It is with sucking apparatus that it attacks," writes Hugo. "The victim is oppressed by a vacuum drawing at numberless points: it is not a clawing or a biting, but an indescribable scarification. A tearing of flesh is terrible, but less terrible than a sucking of the blood. Claws are harmless compared with the horrible action of these natural air cups. The talons of the wild beast enter into your flesh, but with the cephaloptera it is you who enter into the creature. The muscles swell, the fibers of the body are contorted, the skin cracks under the loathsome oppression, the blood spurts out and mingles horribly with the lymph of the monster, which clings to its victim by innumerable hideous mouths. The Hydra incorporates itself with the man; the man becomes one with the Hydra. The spectre lies upon you; the devil-fish, horrible, sucks your life-blood away. He draws you to him, and into himself; while bound down, glued to the ground, powerless, you feel yourself gradually emptied into this horrible pouch." 10, p. 124)

Jones explains the blood-sucking characteristic of the vampire belief as stemming from repressed oral sadism of childhood. (11, p. 130) Oral sadism is also one of the factors in the origin of myths of female dragons (18) as well as many other female demons of folklore, fairy tales and literature. The infant revels in the pleasure it obtains from nursing at the mother's breast. This situation supports the child's feelings of omnipotence. But upon being weaned or even temporarily denied the nipple it is overcome with rage and desire to bite, tear, drink or devour the entire contents of the mother's body. Upon the development of its conscience, i.e., its super-ego, these oral aggressive wishes are projected outside itself on to other people or in fantasy constructions such as demons. Thus the child relieves himself of his growing sense of guilt—thus he sets up a defense against it. It is no longer he who wishes to devour the mother; it is a female demon who wishes to devour him.

## SYMBOLISM OF THE OCTOPUS

In the case of the octopus and the vampire, the oral sadism attributed to them seems to stem primarily, though not exclusively, from the unconscious urge to recover only the first phase of the nursing situation, i.e., the sucking, not the biting phase—the warm blood being a substitute or symbol of the warm milk. It is striking how little emphasis is placed on the biting and tearing characteristics of these creatures. Certain vampire beliefs, themselves, support the interpretation of the warm blood being a substitute for milk. The German *Alp*, it is believed, sucks the nipples of men and children, and withdraws milk from women and cows more often than blood. The *Drud* (devil) of the German Palatinate also sucks the breast of children, while the southern Slav *Mora* sucks blood or milk indifferently. There is a popular belief, in certain regions, that owls, like “real” vampires, suck at the udders of cows and the breasts of children. (11, p. 107)

The symbolism of the vampire, like many other demon creations, is overdetermined. But since it apparently involves the projection of impulses stemming from a child-mother relationship we might expect a preponderance of female references. This is the case in Kipling's vampire poem and in American slang, especially in the daily speech of Hollywood. In the latter area, a vampire invariably means an irresistible female siren lover who drains away her lover's energy, ambition and even life, for selfish reasons.

Like the vampire, the sex of the octopus is also overdetermined, but in most instances it is obviously feminine. A young lady who had used an octopus motif in an art design, when questioned by a child as to the sex of the animal, answered “female”, without much thought. On second consideration she was not sure why it should be so. A young man when talking about the octopus stated, “when it is moving about beautifully, I think of it as female, but when it is attacking, it is male.” A second young man who had used the octopus in creative work, said, “It reminds me of





PLATE I  
WOOD-BLOCK PRINT BY KUNIYOSI (1797-1861)



1.

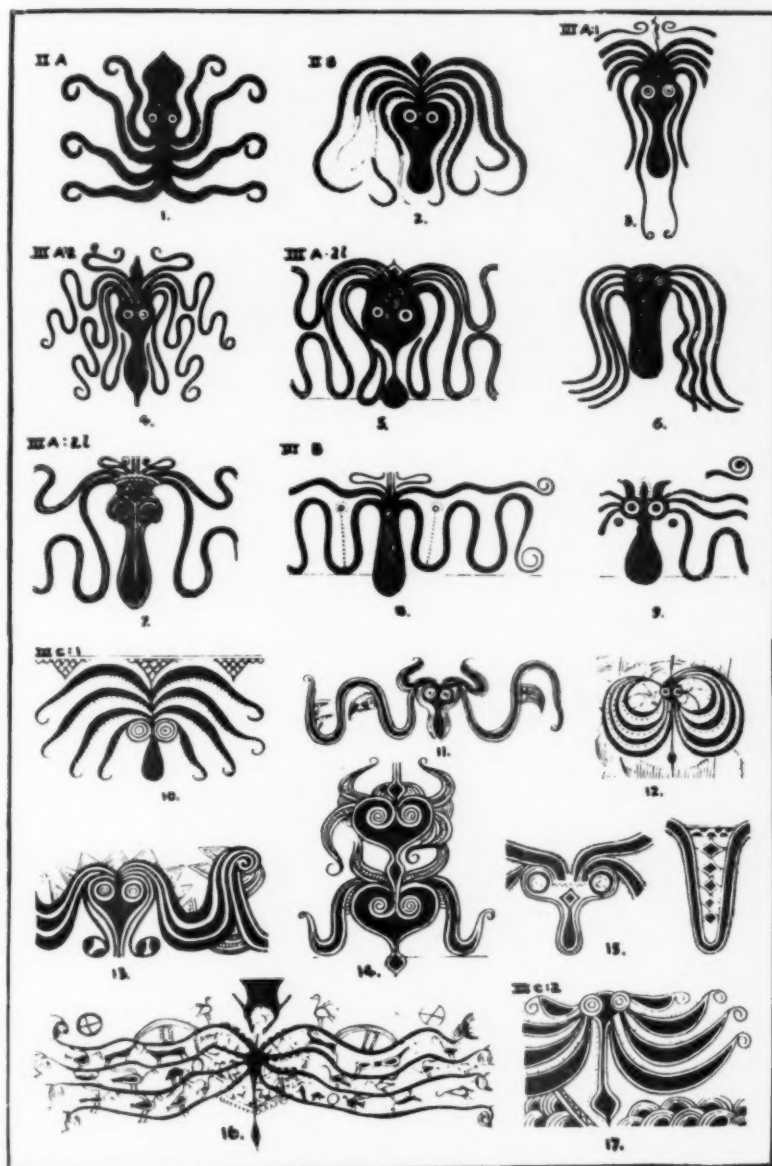


## PLATE II

Figure 1. Octopus jar from Gournia.  
(courtesy of the Candia Museum, Crete)

Figure 2. Large jar with inverted octopus motif.  
(courtesy of the Candia Museum, Crete)





Fururmark: Chronology of Mycenaean Pottery.

### PLATE III

## FURURMARK'S CHART SHOWING TRANSITIONS IN MYCENAEAN OCTOPUS

(from the representational to the disintegrated phase)

Superior numerals designate historical or stylistic periods.



1.



2.



3.

#### PLATE IV.

Figures 1 and 2, pots from the Athens Agora.  
(courtesy of American School of Classical studies, Athens.)

Figure 3. Late Mycenaean jar  
(from C. W. Blegen: *Prosymna*, Cambridge University Press)

the Chinese dragon on a Covarrubious mural painting, or the dragon of fairy tales that hides in a cave and is overpowered by a knight in order to save a beautiful princess. You know that a dragon requires a young woman to devour as a tribute." But even behind this apparently male dragon there lurks the female, implied by features such as the cave into which it is necessary to enter to attack it. This recalls Gilliatt's battle with the octopus referred to above; like the knight, he also enters a cave to meet his adversary.

The similarity between the dragon and the octopus is marked in a Polynesian myth in which the dragon appears in a very instructive series of manifestations obviously of female symbolic significance. The first form assumed by the monster in this story is a gaping shellfish of enormous size; then it appears as a mighty octopus, and lastly, as a whale, into whose jaws the hero Nganaoa springs, as his representatives are said to have done elsewhere throughout the world. (19, p. 172)

Though referred to several times as a "he" the female identity of the octopus is finally revealed in the fantasy called "The Octopus" related to me by a ten year old boy who referred to himself on this occasion as Oete Pie. "Some time ago when it was raining a frog jumped under the lily pad and went to sleep. Here the frog was awakened by a minnow, who said, 'There is one channel you haven't explored under the lily pad—it goes to the ocean. There is an octopus there which you can visit without going overland. The frog said, 'Thank you' and then forgot the information. Later it came back to his mind and he went down to see if there was a channel. His sixth sense told him where to go. Then a most surprising thing happened. There was a sign at the bottom which said, 'This Way to the Ocean.' The frog said this must be the channel so he went into the hole. Strange as it may seem he didn't have to hold his breath underwater. Five minutes later after much swimming he came to the top in mid-ocean and there he saw the octopus. The octopus, who was a little cuckoo in the noodle said to the frog, 'Am I a little orange?' The frog answered, 'of

course you are!' 'If I am orange I will seat you up,' said the octopus, 'because I made a resolution that if you said I was orange, I'd eat you. If you had said I was green I wouldn't.' Just then machine gun bullets started spitting the water (this was on the Korean battlefront) and hit the octopus in the head and killed him. At this instant the most beautiful fairy appeared and said to the frog, 'I will change you into your old self the Prince of England who has been missing three weeks,' and then the fairy continued, 'An old witch transformed you in your sleep and later I captured the witch and killed her. Now all I have to do is change you into your old shape. This witch who was secretly the octopus was killed by me,' and then she said, 'By the way there were two witches (sisters). One got killed two weeks ago by me and the other by me now.' "

Since this study of the octopus symbol converges at several points on the dragon symbol it seems appropriate to relate the associations of a writer, with a noticeable speech defect, to this phantasy animal. Commenting on the idea of a "dragon lady", he remarked, "When I was in Paris, I became passionately attracted to a statue in the Luxembourg, which depicted a female with the attributes of a dragon embracing a young man who is kissing her. As he does so, she buries her claws into him and rips out his heart. She was full breasted and characteristically feminine. The statue fascinated me and I was irresistably drawn to it time and again. This reminds me of a novel I started to compose when I was fifteen years old. It was patterned after Hawthorne's 'Rappaccini's Daughter' (*Mosses from the Old Manse*) based on the theme of a scientist who imbues his daughter with poison so that anything she breathes on will die. A young man wishes to marry the woman but when he finds out that her breath is poisonous and will kill him, he changes his mind. About this time I came across Keat's poem 'Lamia,' the story of man in love with a woman supposed to be a serpent, and decided to use this theme instead for my novel, but I never finished it." Here, the three art themes of a full-breasted destructive dragon, a poison-breathing young

woman and the man-devouring female monster of the Greeks form a striking series of associations which dramatically symbolize the writer's own unconscious cannibalistic attitude towards women.

### THE OCTOPUS AND THE SPIDER

Another animal, in this case a real one, with which the octopus is compared is the spider. Hugo, in addition to associating the octopus to the Hydra, the Medusa head and a vampire, writes, "(Gilliat) had thrust his arms deep into the opening; the monster had snapped at it. It held him fast, as the spider holds the fly." (10, p. 125) Another author, writing about the octopus, states, "He does not pursue his prey; he waits like some unimaginable spider in the center of his web of far reaching tentacles, with his huge eyes piercing the surrounding sepia-stained waters until a quiver from one of the outlying arms sets the abysmal mouth agape, the mighty parrot-like mandibles clashing as the struggling victim is conveyed inwards." (3, p. 140)

A vivid comparison of the octopus with the spider is portrayed in a moving picture based on an Arabian Night theme. The hero, a little boy is chased by a jinnee to a temple of a goddess. Climbing through a passageway which is too small for the jinnee to follow, the boy enters a secret sanctum which houses a large image of the goddess. On her forehead is a precious eye-like jewel, which, although taboo, he sets out to obtain. But in order to do so he must climb through the threads of an enormous web at the top of which crouches a giant spider. Below him in the deep waters at the base of the image lies an octopus in wait. Finally he cuts the web thus causing the giant spider to fall to the octopus below. (14) In fantasies such as this, patterned after the Scylla and Charybdis myth, the two alternative dangers possibly stem from a single source. In other words, Scylla and Charybdis, the spider and the octopus, are manifestations of the same unconscious fear of the mother.

The fact that the female spider is far superior in size to the male, and after intercourse buries her mandibles in him

and drains him of his blood, makes this insect an admirable symbol for the pregenital hostile oral instincts. Sterba, in an interesting article, (21, p. 21) refers to a short story by Hanns Heinz Ewers which dramatically reveals a relationship between spiders and oral sadism. It concerns a young student who sets out to discover the cause of a series of three suicides in a certain hotel room. In each case the method of death is the same—by hanging—and from each of the three corpses, when it is found, runs a spider. After moving into the room, the student soon discovers a woman at a window opposite his. According to his description of her, recorded in his diary, she has all the attributes of a spider—her little teeth taper off in points like the teeth of beasts of prey, she wears black gloves, she spins, and her thin black fingers take up and draw the threads as though they intermingled like a mass of insect legs. He becomes so fascinated by her that he imitates her every gesture even to the extent of being brought to her complete submission and finally to commit suicide.

The origin of the fantasied devouring, blood-sucking spider woman, as a projection of his own unconscious oral sadistic urges is dramatically and artistically portrayed by the condition in which he is found hanging. Crushed between his strong teeth is a great black spider with extraordinary purple spots on its body like those on the black dress worn by the lady at the window opposite. That his sadistic attack on the spider stemmed primarily from the first or sucking phase of the oral stage, as in the case of fantasy attacks by octopuses, is suggested by an entry in his diary shortly after he started his experiment. It concerns his observation, in the hallway of the hotel, of a post-love episode between a large female spider and her mate. Having consummated the love act, the male throws every atom of his strength to escape his lover's web. "Too late, the female already had a grip on him and carried him back to the very middle of the web. And this same place which had served as a bed for their voluptuous pleasure was now the scene of quite another drama. In vain the lover struggled, straining



his weak legs in an effort to escape the wild embrace; the female would not release him. In a few minutes she had spun him into the web so that he couldn't move a limb. Then she struck him with her sharp mandibles and sucked in great draughts of her lover's young blood." (21, p. 25)

The associations of a young lady eighteen years old provide additional evidence of a relationship between the octopus and spider symbols. "I am fascinated by the octopus—the way it looks and moves in the water. I have a fascination for all multilegged creatures—many armed or many legged creatures. But spiders frighten me. I have a fear of them. It's probably because I once saw a movie, *Swiss Family Robinson*. A young man wanted to go into a cave, the entrance to which was blocked by the web of an enormous spider. As he tried to get past the web, the enormous black spider pounces down and overpowers him." In another instance she said, "When I think of an octopus I remember seeing one moving across a small tank in the aquarium and it was a thing of beautiful movement—graceful, slow, but certain—and I remember I was surprised to see the filminess of skin between the arms. It reminds me of a kind of material—soft and flowing of a woman's gown." Here, evidently, the ambivalent feelings towards the mother are expressed by use of separate symbols—the octopus for attraction and love, and the spider for fear and hate.

Further comparison of the octopus with the spider is contained in a case reported by M. M. Stern. A female analyzing and associating to a free-painting of an octopus-like spider said, "At four years, I had my tonsils out. I remember exactly, going under the ether. I always awakened in the middle of the night, for fear a spider had fallen into my hair, and screamed. The red eyes—it is like the inside showing at the outside. Yesterday I swallowed a fly. Last year at Halloween they were "bobbing for apples"; I couldn't do it; I couldn't bite into the apples. I was afraid to put my head under water. Mother's breasts were operated on, brr! When I am not satisfied sexually, I am furious; my stomach is growling, I am coughing. The black widow

spiders are fatal. I always thought spiders were very big and that they would overpower me. They would open up their legs and swallow me. Fear of being choked, like worms choke, like an octopus chokes." (20, p. 80)

Stern comments that, "Spiders as well as octopuses and crabs are typical nightmare symbols." His categorization of the octopus with the crab recalls the fact that in Victor Hugo's story, Gilliatt encounters the octopus while in a cave, as he reaches into a dark crevice in search of a crab. From our knowledge of the unconscious meaning of associated ideas we are led to consider the crab and the octopus as having the same general symbolic significance. Granting this, the monstrous crab in front of the octopus in the Kunoyshi print, referred to earlier, would then be an avatar of the octopus and, thus, an incarnation of the dreaded mother. Since, however, the crab, unlike the octopus is actually dangerous because of its powerful cutting claws, and in this instance holds aloft the great samurai sword, it probably symbolizes, not only the devouring mother, but also the castrating phallic mother.

#### MYCENAEAN OCTOPUS SYMBOL

Returning to the Mycenaean octopus design, as pointed out above, this symbol passed through a number of structural changes leading eventually towards the stylization of the animal into a female demon-like face. Fururmark in his definitive work presents the chronology of these changes for an interval from 1550 to 1075 B.C., a span of almost 500 years. This interval he divides into eleven historical and stylistic periods made up of three main (I, II, III) and eight sub-periods. (9, p. 115) Figures 1 to 17 in the charts (plate III) reproduced from Fururmark's work, represent the types of octopus design used during some of these periods. In studying the chronological series it is obvious that, whereas the artist-potter of the Mycenaean II A period visualized the octopus in a form not far removed from its natural shape and customary position when at rest, potters from the Mycenaean II B to the III C period visualized it upside down



and more and more as a female demon head (female, because of the long snake-like strands of hair streaming from what now appears to be the top of the head, as illustrated in (plate III, fig. 2, 3, 11; and plate IV). It is also obvious, even to the non-psychoanalytically oriented observer, that late designs such as plate III, figures 7, 9, 12, 14 and 16 are phallic symbols. But since the bearer of this organ is evidently female we are led to interpret it as a representation of the unconscious fantasy of the phallic woman, the prototype of which is the fantasied phallic mother.

Taking all these observable facts into consideration it appears that we are standing on ground as firm as that which supports many conclusions in the social sciences when we interpret the Mycenaean octopus symbol as signifying the unconscious fantasy of the female with a penis. But when we ask ourselves what was the meaning of these ancient Greeks' fantasy, we have no other recourse than to compare it with what we have learned about the octopus and phallic woman fantasy in other cultures, past and present, and our own analyzands. On the basis of these analogies and the assumption of a universal similarity in unconscious mental processes of the human mind, we can then hazard our interpretations. If this is conjecture, then let it be considered as such. In many instances, the astronomer, the physicist, the mathematician operate no differently. From the mass, distance, time, and spectroscopic elements measurable in the here and now on our earth, the astronomer computes the mass, distance, composition and time elements relative to bodies millions of light years away. For the present it is the best he can do and generally speaking his method is considered scientifically acceptable.

Extensive psychoanalytic investigation of man's fantasy concerning a woman with a penis has been found to stem from several possible unconscious sources. One, already referred to in connection with Freud's interpretation of the Medusa head, is man's fear of castration which is mitigated by the fantasy of supplying the penisless female with a male organ. If the female has an organ, or, if she has never lost

it, then the male need never fear the loss of his. The snake-like strands of hair emanating from the Medusa head may also symbolize the penis in polyphallic form as multiple assurance against castration. Flügel, in commenting on this feature points out that myths of a great goddess in octopus form are found in many parts of the world. He explains its use as a symbol of the vulva, "when the sight of the latter had become distasteful owing to its association with the ideas of castration." (7)

A further source of the fantasy of the phallic woman is the repressed oral tendencies which unconsciously sees in the fantasied penis, the mother's nipple, displaced from above downward, and long sought for since childhood. This frequently is found to be the meaning of cunnilingus fantasies and practices in analyzands. On the other hand, since it is conceivable that the artist-potters of the Mycenaeans may have been women we should not overlook possible symbolic significance specific for the female. Here again we must fall back upon present day psychoanalytic observation which reveals the extremely common unconscious wish in many women to have a penis just like a man.

At this point, I should like to refer once more to the comparison of the octopus with the Medusa head. One of the striking features of late Mycenaean octopus design is the transformation of the tentacles into strands of wavy hair that give the appearance of a pattern of writhing snakes. The association of the octopus tentacles with snakes is, of course, not uncommon. Miss A. G. Iken (7, p. 163) reports a vivid fantasy experienced by a woman during a delirium tremens attack: "... snakes, twining in and out of curtain and curtain poles—gibbering faces, animal and grotesque caricatures of human beings, glaring at me from all sides. . . Caves full of slimy prehistoric monsters through which I had to pass, ichthyosauri, dinosauri, ugly many-headed reptiles, octopuses stretching out their ghastly tentacles to grip. . . snakes swarmed all over, even my own fingers turned into snakes and bending back twined themselves with cold slimy bodies round my arms." But it is the translation of the

mass of snakes into a head of hair, specifically that of a woman's, to which I wish to direct attention. Now it is just this feature which is also one of the striking characteristics of the Medusa head. And since the Medusa head was created in the very same area in which the octopus was a dominant decorative motif, I am tempted to suggest that this animal provided the ancient Greeks with the first prototype or inspiration for the creation of their Medusa head.\* This leads me to conjecture the origin of the large pantheon of multi-headed and multi-armed gods and goddesses in oriental religious systems, e.g., the Thousand Armed Kwannon of the Japanese. May it not be that here also the multi-armed and multi-legged living forms such as the octopus, crab, centipede, millipede, etc., which primitive man undoubtedly experienced long before the advent of formalized religion, provided him with the original prototypes for the symbols of unconscious thoughts which later were expressed in multi-limbed anthropomorphic shapes?

#### SUMMARY

Now to summarize the material that has been gathered from anthropological, literary and clinical sources in our study of the octopus symbol; we can say first, that its meaning is highly overdetermined. In any given context, whether myth, art or personal fantasy, it may have one or a multiple of unconscious roots. It may function as a defense against fear of castration—supplying in fantasy a penis to the object identified as female. By endowing the tentacles with phallic attributes, a polyphallic symbol is created. Because of its suction discs, gripping and entwining characteristics, it can act as a defense for overwhelming guilt feelings originating in powerful oral impulses. By projecting the oral impulses originally directed toward the mother onto the sucking discs

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\*\*\*After the completion of this investigation, Professor H. R. W. Smith, a classical scholar, called my attention to the fact that W. H. Roscher, in his *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, (1884), had already commented on this possible relationship between the Medusa head and the octopus.

and grasping tentacles, fear of one's own destructive tendencies is abated. In certain instances, the parrot-like beak capable of biting and tearing may also be significant in this respect. For women, the resentment resulting from the observation of a missing member, can be resolved by the fantasy of a female object equipped with an organ or multiples of it.

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# Depth Psychology and Philosophy

by

Ben-Ami Scharfstein

The sciences were once the children of philosophy, but then they got evidence and ran away from home. How this happened has been often described, by the scientists with a pride that sometimes encourages them to philosophize independently. Philosophers have been inspired with a more obscure emotion, in which pride is mingled with envy and the memory of the time when they were as important as the nuclear physicists are today. For while philosophers may command the instrument of logic, logic is uncertain when applied to the usual world, and, apart from pure logic, it seems that the more generally accepted a proof, the less likely it is to be acknowledged as philosophical.

Psychology is the latest of the sciences to gain its independence. The separation divides what was once regarded as inseparable. Even now, as the philosopher may trespass into psychology, the hardier psychologist ventures within the preserves of contemporary epistemology. Without presuming to judge it, one might instance the work of Jean Piaget. According to him, child psychology casts light on the relation of mathematical to physical truth, and on the roles of extralogical intuition and pure logic in the conception of the idea of number. Genetic psychology, he says, has access to the most primitive concepts and can give important epistemological information, in part by explaining how sensations and movements grow into thought. He tries, that is, to "reconcile" logistics with psychology. (1)

However Piaget's claims may be judged, it is obvious that many philosophers want to keep psychology at a distance. They launch the term "psychologism" at the lurking enemy and expect him to flee. The term, the opposite of



"logicism," was invented to characterize the psychological origin of logical knowledge. (2) "Psychologism" is now most often regarded as the spurious claim of psychology to absorb or to serve as the foundation of philosophy. In a cruder sense, it approximates the word, "irrelevancy." (3)

The attack on psychologism has been motivated in part by the ordinary tendency of psychological explanations toward relativism and skepticism. The tendency might be illustrated by a mythical argument. Imagine a diabolical psychologist trying to undermine the confidence of a philosopher. This psychologist would not use the arguments from perception, for familiarity, though perhaps not reason, has blunted their edge. He would use the weapons of "depth psychology," or of psychoanalysis or one of its analogues.

Imagine a diabolically superlative version of the following related arguments, which are six in number:

1. Philosophy, like art, is a method for self-expression. The most powerful motives for self-expression are unconscious, or at least peripheral to consciousness. The expressive medium native to philosophy is abstract reasoning, or, better, intellectualizing—for the reasonable and the intellec-

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1. See Piaget's summary, "Genetic Psychology and Epistemology," in the periodical, *Diogenes*, no. 1. The summary may owe its somewhat enigmatic quality to its brevity. His relevant views are developed in a number of his later books, in *La Psychologie de l'intelligence* (which has been translated), Paris, 1946, and, most notably, in his three-volume *Introduction à l'Épistémologie Génétique*, Paris, 1949-1950.

2. According to Wilhelm Wundt. See the definitions and discussion in Lalande, *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, 5th ed., Paris, 1947, pp. 836-37. Wundt's essay and Husserl's reply are summarized in M. Farber, *The Foundations of Phenomenology*, Cambridge, U.S.A., 1943, pp. 208-211.

3. The development of this sense is described in the first chapter of Farber, *op. cit.* Chapter iv contains a summary of Husserl's "Refutation of Psychologism" in favor of "a theoretical science independent of all psychology and factual science. . . ." (p. 101).

It should be remembered that Husserl did not oppose a psychological explanation of the origin of logical concepts (Farber, p. 154). The attitude of a number of contemporary philosophers is summarily described in footnote 12, below.

tual need not be confused. Since impulse and intellect appear to be opposites, philosophy is an ultimate disguise of unreason. A philosophy is a sheepskin in which a fantastic wolf stalks his prey, who are smaller wolves in less woolly disguises.

2. Philosophy is a method for projecting and introjecting. Through the years in which we are too elementary to reason and too weak to act efficaciously, we develop an interior world of which we catch only glimpses later on. The conscious and the unconscious minds collaborate in growing guilts and ideals within us. Of the guilts we may rid ourselves by punishing ourselves, by stressing what tenuous, meager creatures we are, or by proving to our own satisfaction that we must deny ourselves pleasure, however innocent it appears. Or we may get rid of the guilt by attributing it to the external world, to the Devil, to Fate, to the Materialists, or to the Idealists, as the case may be. The universe is seen as a great transfigured replica of oneself in which smaller transfigurations take their ease or pain. This is also true of ideals. And yet the conscience, the guilt, and even the "external world" so-called are built up in us through the assimilation of the persons, attitudes, and ideas of others into our prior and not quite plastic beings. To use an image that need not imply a Leibnizian metaphysics, the universe is a set of mirrors each reflecting the others with its individual distortion and nested reflections.

3. Philosophy is a method for escaping from threatening emotions. That is why it so often expresses obsessive certainty and obsessive doubt, each of which is the dual face of the other. The philosopher, like anyone else, is an arena to his lions and gladiators. Sharp, unending inner conflict, the indecisive victory of one impulse over another that remains threatening, may come to an obsessive equilibrium in dogma or doubt.

A dogma, to be psychically effective, follows one cardinal rule: it cannot be self-evidently reasonable, for then it would have no purpose; it must, by its very nature, suggest the possibility of its untruth. It is the philosopher's function,

if he supports the dogma, to suggest, expound, refine, and refute, all possible doubts. He spends almost as much intellectual energy in doubting what he believes as in believing it. The dogma thus images his inner conflict and resolves it, externally. The Christian philosophers of the Middle Ages did not invent all their reasoning to confute the Pagans, Jews, and Moslems, or just to support or attack heretics. They wanted, as they did not know, to express the doctrine in the way that would best allow them to express their inner opposition to it, as by an inherent ridicule: How can the flesh of cannibals and of the men they have eaten be equally restored at the Resurrection. Could God's son have changed himself into a devil? Can God make a virgin of a fallen woman? They were in the case of the compulsion neurotic who brooded over the problem of the door, whether the door that filled the space was more important than the empty space it filled. (4) Finally, the subtle philosophers of the later Middle Ages, such as William of Ockham and Duns Scotuus, were able to refine their analysis until it permanently endangered their own cause.

The mystic may therefore oppose even orthodox philosophy:

"Whoever feels doubt in his heart is a secret philosopher. He may profess firm belief, but some time or other that philosophical vein will blacken his face for all to see. Take care, O ye Faithful! That vein is in you: within you is many an infinite world. Within you are all the two-and-seventy sects: woe to you if one day they put forth their heads!" (5a)

Why, after all, do people turn to philosophy? One reason is that it provides unanswerable questions, allowing doubt to spread its wings. If such a question, chosen by the philosopher because it is unanswerable, is answered by him with certainty, the answer functions as his private dogma. Thus the confirmed skeptic and the philosopher who dogmatizes are alike in their irresolute resolution and the ridicule they draw on themselves by their own efforts: Pyrrho, to be kept out of harm's way, was led around by less

skeptical friends; Hegel, in August of 1801, rationalized the gap between Mars and Jupiter that had already been filled by the discovery of Ceres in January, and he also made rationalistic refutations of evolution, whether of the planetary system or of organic life. (5b) And, of course, skeptics can be socially dangerous because they influence people to drift, and dogmatists dangerous because they fight their rebel impulses with such rigidity and force. Plato would banish poets, keep out strangers, and kill stubborn atheists. Was this because he was a poet himself, and, like Socrates before him, was the stranger and the atheist in the marketplace—the man who estranged himself by casting rational doubt

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4. O. Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, New York, 1945, p. 297.

5a From "The Sceptic," by Rumi, a Moslem poet of the 13th century. In R. A. Nicholson (translator and annotator), *Rumi*, London, 1951, p. 75. "The Prophet is said to have predicted that the Moslem community would be divided into seventy-three sects, of which only one would enter Paradise, the remainder being destined for Hell-fire."

5b To be fair: Diogenes Laertius adds that some said that Pyrrho could take care of himself; and Hegel's planetary lapse may not be as bad as it sounds. Dilthey simply thinks the lapse unfortunate (*Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels*, in *Werke*, vol. iv, p. 195; pp. 238-247 for Hegel's "philosophy of nature" and its relation to Schelling's). Willy Moog (*Hegel und die Hegelsche Schule*, Munich, 1930, pp. 18-19) and Hermann Glockner (*Hegel*, vol. ii, Stuttgart, 1940, pp. 237-39) minimize it. Hegel himself, in 1817, called his earlier planetary theory unsatisfactory (*Encyclopädie*, ed. Hoffmeister, Leipzig, 1949 (5th ed.), note p. 245 (to para. 280). See also, B. Beaumont, "Hegel and the Seven Planets," *Mind*, Vol. LXIII, #250, April 1954, pp. 246-48.

6. E.g., see the material in Georges Dumas, *Le Surnaturel et les dieux d'après les maladies mentales*, Paris, 1946. Paranoids are often distinguished from schizophrenic paranoids, in whom there is a strong tendency toward a general disorganization of the personality. Quite seriously, schizophrenic tendencies may manifest themselves in an interest in philosophy, spiritualism, astrology, and other "deep" or "mystical" subjects, and in—psychology.

Much of the foregoing (third) argument is suggested by T. Reik, *Dogma and Compulsion*, New York, 1951. Reik is concerned with religious dogma, but the extension to philosophy is obvious.

on common beliefs? Would Plato as a philosopher-king have tried Socrates and condemned him?

Another characteristic of philosophers is their terminological precision. This is just as much a characteristic of obsessional neurosis. Flickering fantasy, irresolution, and struggle, these underlie the disguising precision. Precision may hide the doubt from eyes that do not pry too far. But the end is insanity. Some paranoids invent elaborate systematic terminologies and a new conceptual world. (6) The world is cruel to them; but in the new one they replace it with, the troubles, alas, reappear in symbolic form. They may have fantasies of world creation and destruction that are the exaggerated analogues of the philosophical systems and utopias on the one hand, and, on the other, of the destructive criticism and malignant prophecies of the bitter philosophers. Others of the insane, who cannot bear the world or bear themselves, retreat into an infantile euphoria that resembles the mystical experience.

4. Philosophy is a method of aggression and submission. Since it rationalizes biases, philosophers rarely convince one another, surely not as often as they would if one position were clearly more reasonable than its rival and they had the ability to distinguish and act on this difference. When philosophers do convince one another, it may be for the mutual pleasures of psychic fatherhood and sonhood. Or there may be a conversion, motivated, as usual, by suppressed fantasies, and not very different in kind from religious conversion. If it were not the irrational psychic forces that persuaded, how could one explain the initially implausible fact, to which the history of philosophy bears redundant witness, that the disciples of a departed master never agree on what he taught or what the importance of his teaching was. (7a) The disciples need to maintain the aggressive function of philosophy. For although philosophy is a refined method of attack, it is ordinarily disputatious, intransigent, and cruel.

5. Philosophy is a method for exhibiting oneself and for observing others. Self-observation is sometimes a substitute

for the observation of others that one's conscience or shyness may forbid; just as the feeling of the objectivity of one's thoughts protects one from the shame that might accompany a less disguised exhibition of oneself. Philosophy is a universal prying and a search for fame. Philosophers are often modest but expect at least eternity as their reward. (5b)

6. Finally, philosophy is a method for conscious and unconscious self-creation. It gives personality a manifest content, it defines the goals of desire, it gives the acts of life a ritual significance by generalizing their meaning and making them symbolical of the impulses and values that lie behind and result from them. It might therefore be called a species of religion, an abbreviated religion, even when irreligious. While it may be necessary, it is not wholly rational. If we were fond of paradoxes, we would say that philosophy proves that it, philosophy, cannot exist. No one can be rational enough to be what a philosopher thinks he is.

If the diabolical psychologist had elaborated the preceding arguments with suasive perfection, if he had given a suitable defense to the doctrines of depth psychology that the philosopher doubted, and if he had managed to avoid stumbling over his concealed metaphysics, the philosopher, if candid, would be taken aback. The indictment would con-

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7a Husserl's assistants in his last years were Ropohl, Fink, and Landgrebe. Fink and Landgrebe were editors of his works, as Heidegger had been of the *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*. Husserl accepted Fink as his spokesman. Yet all three of the former assistants have gone their own speculative ways. Can a more nearly orthodox follower of Husserl claim they did not understand their master? On Landgrebe's philosophy, in which the influence of Husserl mingles with that of Dilthey and Heidegger, see W. Cerf, "A Metaphysical Phenomenology," in the *Review of Metaphysics*, vol. v, no. 1, Sept., 1951. Fink explains what he considers to be the obscure presuppositions, hidden bias, and insufficiency, of Husserl's phenomenology in *Problèmes actuels de la Phénoménologie*, by Thévenaz and others, Paris (Desclée Brouwer), 1952. Jean Wahl's summing up in this book discloses the differences (and similarities) of emphasis by the close students of phenomenology who took part in the colloquium the book records.



firm the doubts he could not entertain very strongly if he were to keep his self-respect. Our devil is simply the inner voice of the philosopher when depressed. But the indictment consists, after all, of modern variations on old, familiar skeptical themes, and comes to grief on an old, familiar paradox.

This paradox, which is almost childishly simple, is illustrated by the end of the sixth argument: "Philosophy proves that philosophy cannot exist." Speaking empirically rather than out of logical sophistication, the use of reason can naturally never demonstrate its own total fallibility. (8) Though a skeptic might take refuge in an infinite regress, daily life makes his hesitant negations implausible. No matter how psychological, sociological, or otherwise genetic, our explanations, we accept the authority of reason.

Why, then, is the genetic fallacy committed, and why are there condemnable instances of historicism and psychologism? It is true that opponents mobilize all convenient irrelevancies against one another. But occasionally we feel that it does not help to enter into a direct but indecisive battle, and that we might see more rewardingly if we searched in the subtle, unknown network of relations between reason and its environment. Even erroneous fathers can have good children.

Consider the history of mathematics, which of all histories is most nearly dominated by pure reason. We know how social pressure energized it and gave it a cumulative character. Egyptian arithmetic was engendered by abstract reason and the need to keep accounts involving large numbers; progress in arithmetic engendered in its turn the ability

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5b More theologically, this is the "craving for undue exaltation" that Augustine shared and denounced so eloquently, or the inevitable residue of sin of which Niebuhr speaks.

8. "Speaking empirically" is necessary, and "childishly simple" misleadingly optimistic. The paradox is of course a variation on the *pseudomenos*: "This statement I now make is false." See, e.g., Herman Weyl, *Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science*, Princeton, 1949, Appendix A, in which (notes pp. 220, 228-29) he shows the relation of the classical paradoxes to Goedel's disquieting theorems.



to keep track of still more numerous prisoners, larger herds of oxen, and more capacious granaries; and these gave the scribes leisure to indulge in increasingly difficult computations. And if the pharaoh required a pyramid, then the levelling of its bed, its perfect squaring, the orientation of its sides to the cardinal points, and the cutting, moving, and fitting of its blocks, gave an obvious incentive to geometry. Egyptian geometry was a kind of religious and political wisdom which, in both senses of the phrase, maintained the forms. As for the Sumerians, the great ancient geniuses in algebra, they were stimulated by astronomy and business. Their algebra was also an answer to the question how long it would take for a sum of money to double itself at a compound interest rate of twenty percent. (9)

Of course, the formal correctness of Egyptian and Sumerian mathematics depends neither on religion nor business. Why therefore lose interest in the facts that helped instigate the formalities, in the money, fame, esthetic pleasure, or psychic calm, that rewarded and prolonged the discovery urge that could not have troubled merely ideal beings? How far would the Pythagoreans have gone in mathematics if they had no desire to penetrate nature and purge themselves of grossness; and if they had no pebbles (or dots in the sand) to help them conceive? It can be answered that minds in which mathematics demanded to be actualized could have found other arrangeable objects and entered into other associations. But it remains true that mathematics, as humans pursue it, needs a material pressure. (10)

It is a fact that may be considered strange that certain irrelevancies from the formal standpoint are indispensable to the mind that conceives the relevancies. To overcome the problems of the cycloid, Pascal needed more than the resources of contemporary mathematics and his own genius.

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9. The remarks on Egyptian and Sumerian mathematics are based on George Sarton, *A History of Science*, Cambridge U.S.A., 1952, vol. I. For the pyramids see also I.E.S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt*, Pelican Books, 1947, chap. 7.

Specifically, he needed an excruciating toothache, as an antidote to which he strongly turned his mind to the cycloid. The pain stopped, and Pascal took this as a signal that Heaven approved of the tenor of his thoughts, which his piety would ordinarily have condemned, and so he abandoned himself to the cycloid for eight days and solved many of its problems. (11)

How irrelevant in fact to their respective mathematical achievements were the embitterment, the suicidal duel, and the feverish mathematical testament of Galois; the ideal of scientific academies, a united Europe, and a universal logic of Leibniz; the early paralysis of the larynx and the bad eyesight of Henri Poincaré? If psychology cannot say "true" or "false" of mathematical solutions, it can perhaps go some way towards answering the two strange questions Poincaré asked: If mathematics follows the rules of logic that all normal minds accept, how is it that so many normal minds cannot understand mathematics? How is it that error is possible in mathematics?

Theoretically, psychology can explain why each mathematician and logician becomes one, why he has his own style of work, his form of forms, and his own peculiar failures and successes. One might even foresee a scientific and meta-mathematical description of the nervous system that would

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10. The concessions relative to mathematics may be too great. Not to make them would force me into a realm in which I am incompetent, but, in view of Goedel's work, it has become defensible to say that "mathematizing" may well be a creative activity of man, like music, the products of which not only in form but also in substance are conditioned by the decisions of history and therefore defy complete objective rationalization." (Weyl, *op cit.*, p. 219) Goedel believes that it is a "fact that our logical intuitions are self-contradictory." (Weyl, p. 234) But Goedel remains a realist, as he stresses in his essay on "Russell's Mathematical Logic" in *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, ed. P. Schillup, Northwestern University (see esp. p. 137); while Russell, in the same book, says, "The more I have thought about it, the less convinced I have been of the complete independence of logic"—from psychology and even physiology (p. 14).

11. Bell, *Men of Mathematics*, p. 85.

be superior to ordinary mathematics in that it would contain whatever mathematics a human being can conceive (though more is conceivable than he can actually conceive), and in that it would stimulate and direct creativity better than we now can. Psychology as a perfected exact science might know the sufficient as well as the necessary conditions of mathematics.

Psychology will not soon reach this fantastic perfection. But it is already relevant, in its own way, not only to the form of forms, but also to the assumptions that logic and mathematics make when applied. The value of the assumptions is decided on empirical grounds, whether scientific usefulness, fertility in further ideas, or some species of pleasure in manipulation and contemplation. The debate over these grounds can be enriched, though surely not decided, by psychological considerations. At any rate, since the defense of a fundamental assumption is by nature incompletely factual and logical, there is no cause for alarm in the knowledge that the defense can be changed in kind or intensity by psychological considerations. If the sciences themselves are defended on extralogical and extrascientific grounds, even a positivistic philosophy can become as "reasonable" as possible only if it considers its assumptions in the light of information it might regard as irrelevant within the structure of the individual sciences. That we do or must accept a given assumption still leaves us with an irresistible impulse to examine it, and we adopt whatever other assumptions we need to gratify the impulse. When straining at the limits of reason, we go so far as to examine assumptions by means of statements ultimately containing them, and we sometimes profit by this inevitable circular scrutiny. (12)

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12. This circularity is a leading theme of Piaget's *Introduction à l'Épistémologie Génétique*. For the ordinary rectilinear series of sciences (mathematics, physics, biology, etc.), he substitutes a circle. Genetic psychology, he says, explains how the operations of logic and mathematics are constructed, all the while itself implying the other sciences, which serve to explain psychology. He considers the circle a particular case of the circle of subject and object, neither of which is knowable

In addition to unproved and not strictly provable statements, philosophy has always contained vague statements. Vague statements are those with undetermined associations. They express conflicting emotions, complex experiences, and broad tendencies. They are subject at every step to alternate and always incomplete logical formulations. The elementary error often made by partisans of exactness is that they formulate a disputed position in a few, relatively logical schemas, and easily reduce some, if not all, to absurdity. But vague arguments cannot usually be refuted by precise ones because the germinal intentions out of which the vague spring cause constant reformulations of formulas that prove weak under attack. As Hegel demonstrates, it is even possible to create a defensible system patterned in contradictions. The precise argument is a net, and fluidity escapes through its meshes.

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without the other. Such expanding circles are, he says, common in science. E.g., to measure time we need timepieces having standard isochronous movements, but these movements imply others that serve to measure them (*op. cit.*, pp. 40-41).

In this connection, it would be interesting to study the actual relations of philosophy and psychology. All I can do here is note the attitude of a few well-known contemporary European philosophers.

A. J. Ayer thinks that philosophy should clarify the empirical content of psychoanalysis and its logical relations to behaviorism and gestalt psychology (*Language, Truth, and Logic*, ed. of 1946, p. 152).

Nicolai Hartmann says that no philosopher, ancient or modern, has treated the theory of knowledge in fitting isolation. The strict theory of knowledge should be metalogical and metaphysical (*Grundzüge einer metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, Berlin, 1941 (3rd, unchanged ed.), pp. 17-22).

In *Philosophie* (1932, 1948, pp. 171-76), Karl Jaspers discusses psychology and sociology as "borderline sciences," which sometimes become ontological dogmas. It is his view that "no psychology can make it clear to me what I really am" (*Man and the Modern Age*, London, 1951, p. 157). But in *Von der Wahrheit* (Munich, 1947, pp. 20-21) it appears that neither logic (in his sense) nor psychology should be used alone in ultimate explanation, but each through the other to give a sort of insight into the "prelogical."

It was Cassirer's opinion that Freud disrupted empirical evidence

If, therefore, there is a "genetic fallacy," there is also a "logical fallacy." The "logical fallacy" is an emphasis on the particular verbal formulas a thinker employs instead of on his basic intentions. (13) As in poetry, words in philosophy have to be studied for their irrational associations, for it is just these that supply the absent links, or directions, or intentions, of their rational sequences. A philosophy seems to have been refuted, and then a cleverer man or a man with a more recent education states it over and it stands again on its own stalwart legs. Of what use is it to confute a single head of a hydra-headed argument? Of what use to make statements that for want of empirical evidence and iron rigor remain fallible and that are also emotionally unpersuasive? It is not enough to know in the abstract, as we all do, that emotions disturb judgment. Though a philosopher uses a deceptively neutral idiom, he still may not know how to inspire fair judgment rather than

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to fit a reductive theory (*An Essay on Man*, New Haven, 1944, p. 21, 75); but he had a great interest in psychology, as his writings demonstrate (e.g., *op. cit.*, chaps. iii, iv). In the *Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer* (ed. P. Schilpp, Evanston, Illinois, 1949), Kurt Lewin writes on the illumination for psychology in Cassirer's doctrines, and Suzanne Langer comments on his use of psychiatric and ethnological information. The latter also points out the close relation between some aspects of Freud and Cassirer, despite Cassirer's opposition to psychoanalysis, which he seems not to have studied closely.

For a discussion of Heidegger's influence, see Hans Kunz on "philosophical anthropology" and Ludwig Binswanger on psychiatry, both in *Martin Heideggers Einfluss auf die Wissenschaften*, Bern, 1949. There is an analogous article by Renato de Rosa, "Existenzphilosophische Richtungen in der modernen Psychopathologie," in *Offener Horizont, Festschrift für Karl Jaspers*, Munich, 1953, pp. 181-91.

The extent to which psychology can penetrate philosophy, and vice versa, may be seen in M. Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la Perception*, Paris, 1945, in which about half of the extensive bibliography consists of strictly psychological works. Merleau-Ponty claims (pp. 184-85) that Freud and psychoanalysis do not oppose but unknowingly contribute to the phenomenological method. He is closest to Gestalt psychology, but believes that it too can be transcended in Existentialism.

blind, though intellectualized, hostility or approval.

If depth psychology is justified, it has become possible in some senses to know a philosophy better than its creator does, an ability that has in any case always been claimed by epigones. "To know more deeply" is in this instance an ambiguous phrase, for depth and genuine clarity may not be the same. Every current psychological analysis is burdened with its confusions and unverified assumptions. When applied, it gives an oversimple, overemphatic, congealed, awry image of a complicated, delicately balanced, shifting state of affairs. The information on which the analysis is based is often insufficient for a more delicate understanding. One gets the feeling that the analyst, even the perceptive one, is using an axe to engrave the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin. And though fundamental directions of impulse may be known, the intellect and the imagination give them unforeseen shapes, and the degree to which the intellect resists or colors the impulses cannot be easily predicted.

Nevertheless, one might amuse oneself with the vision of an omniscient psychology. This psychology could from some external facts and the dreams of a philosopher deduce what he had already said or would say in the future. As psychology it might not know that Descartes would become the tutor of Queen Christine of Sweden. But it might predict the expression his philosophy would assume if he became the morning tutor of a sturdy, scholarly young queen of a cold country.

In the case of Descartes the problem is interesting because, as is well known, he had three notable dreams on November 10th, 1619, having gone to bed full of excitement over the discovery that day of the basis of true science.

Descartes began interpreting his dreams while still asleep, and many others have tried their skill at unriddling them. (14) I do not dare to interpret them myself; but of

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13. While I have not read it, I assume that A. J. Ayer's critique of Sartre may be weakened by this "fallacy." See his article in *Horizon* of July, 1945, and of August, 1945.



dreams in general it may be said that they are a prephilosophical philosophy. There are dream processes that are non-conceptual. But the clearly thinkable dream, the dream that can be remembered, the top, so to speak, of the dream, can be put into rationally organized words and is to that extent conceptual. It may be, as Freud says, that causal or logical arguments or speeches are taken over from waking thought and assimilated into the dream. But fresh insights, which in philosophy must be rationally statable, originate partly in the unconscious, and if developed logical argument is taken over from waking thought, it is paradoxically true that the seed of the logic, even the suggestion of new logical procedures, lies also in the unconscious, that is, in unknown, not conscious processes out of which reason grows and renews itself. (15)

The dream may be called a prephilosophical philosophy because it has its own modes of organization, which remain visible beneath the more conscious organizations of both art and metaphysics. In dreaming, images of the external world become symbols of psychic tendencies and physical states. Chaotic or at least separate and conflicting tendencies are organized into a fantasy. The dreamer thus experiences himself awakened into sleep, as a coherence of bodies, impulses, and memories, all changingly equilibrated with the everyday conscious mind, and revealing in its unsteady flux the person that is himself and no other, but like

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14. See the remarks and references in Henri Gouhier, *La Pensée religieuse de Descartes*, Paris, 1924, pp. 315-18; and in Etienne Gilson, *René Descartes Discours de la Méthode*, Paris, 1926 (2nd ed.), pp. 157-59. Freud himself declined to interpret the dreams, though supposing them of the type the dreamer himself may understand much of. There is, however, a psychoanalytic interpretation by John O. Wisdom ("Three Dreams of Descartes," in *The Yearbook of Psychoanalysis*, vol. iv, 1948, pp. 211-15). Wisdom's interpretation will be unconvincing to anyone who does not accept Freudian theory. There is another analysis, by Marie-Louise von Franz, in the third volume of the *Jung-Studien*, Zurich, 1952.

15. See the thoughtful discussion in S. Lowy, *Foundations of Dream Interpretation*, London, 1942.



the other. To the extent that they are incompletely reasonable, philosophies are rationalized projections of fantasies or dreams, expressed in the vocabulary that the time makes plausible.

To give an idea of the "irrelevant" enlightenment that may be gained from a psychological description of a philosopher, I cite the examples of Spinoza, Kant, and Santayana. I ask the reader to remember that my descriptions are condensed and, in relation to the importance of the subject, only cursory. They are so general that to a psychologist they may have a too-familiar air, and to the unpsychological philosopher the air of upstart presumption. I mean only to give examples of approach rather than definitive analysis. And, above everything, it must be remembered that no one supposes that an impulse that underlies a theory is the same as the theory, or that to discover such an impulse degrades the theory to its own blind level. Yet the discovery of the impulses, even in their crudest, least differentiated forms, may eventually contribute as much to a total understanding as did the discovery of simple physiological facts to a knowledge of the complex equilibria of the whole organism. (16)

Spinoza had a firm, unsentimental grasp of psychology. He belittled the morality that praises an ideal but non-existent human nature while attacking human nature as it exists in fact. (17) In practice, however, this unsentimental

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16. A competent analyst realizes how much and in what ways he is not explaining. It is unfair to say without qualification, as Jaspers does, that "the self-examination of a sincere thinker . . . is in psychoanalysis degraded into the discovery of sexual longings and typical experiences of childhood." (*Man and the Modern Age*, p. 153) The self-examination is made by a living, impulsive, only fitfully rational creature, who becomes the less rational for forgetting his nature. The problem of the analyst is to respect historical and individual circumstance, not to apply generalizations mechanically, and to penetrate far enough to give fresh insight. What may and may not be expected of psychoanalysis at the present is competently discussed by Ernst Kris, with respect to the creator, in *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art*, New York, 1952, pp. 13-31.

17. *Tractatus Politicus*, trans. Elwes, Bohn's Library, p. 287 (chap. 1).

attitude had a strongly cynical color. When he was ten years old he was already surprising people by the cleverness with which he satirized human wiles. (18) Somehow he was or became, in the old and fitting word, "prudent," at fifteen already attaching little importance, says his biographer Lucas, to friendliness and praise, and so much in love with Truth that he hardly saw anyone. Spinoza does think of people as overconfident fools or fatuous beggars. (19) Correspondingly, the *Improvement of the Understanding* declares at the outset that ordinary social life is vain and futile.

We cannot doubt that Spinoza had a sharp intellect and an excellent metaphysical imagination. But it is hard to believe that such abilities, irrespective of any other factor, are enough to make a person generally suspicious or scornful. To put it bluntly, his attitude does not stem from sharp perception alone, but from a feeling of abandonment, from anger at the world and unhappiness within it, a feeling that afflicted him "like a deadly disease." (20) In the light of modern knowledge, it would not be surprising if the feeling were the result of the early loss of his mother, who died when he was six. (21)

Whatever the cause, Spinoza bore his relatives resentment, an emotion his philosophy considers evil. He repeated philosophical justifications for relative poverty, but he gave

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18. When not based on Spinoza's writings, my remarks stem from the biographies by Lucas and Colerus. These cannot be completely trustworthy, but the chief traits they picture are in consonance with his image in his books. For a more nearly adequate documentation see Scharfstein and Ostow, "The Unconscious Sources of Spinoza's Philosophy," in the *American Imago*, vol. ix, #s 3 & 4, 1952, pp. 221-37.

19. *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, trans. Elwes, Bohn's Library, Preface, p. 3.

20. *The Improvement of the Understanding*, in *Spinoza, Selections*, ed. John Wild, p. 3.

21. His father having died, a guardian was appointed over Spinoza, in March of 1656, when he was still a minor, though only a few months away from his excommunication. But the appointment may have been for business reasons. (A. M. Vaz Dias and W. G. van der Tak, *Spinoza: Mercator et Autodidactus*, 's-Gravenhage, 1932, pp. 31, 66-67)

himself away, if his biographer is right, in saying that he refused to accumulate possessions because he did not want his relatives to inherit what they did not deserve. There is an inkling here that he was punishing himself in order to punish others. His very excommunication is related, according to Lucas, to his suspicious nature. There were two would-be friends to whom Spinoza confided some of his philosophy. But then, since he thought that curiosity usually has bad motives, he broke off the association abruptly. The two were naturally resentful, and the denunciation to the authorities followed.

Spinoza was a quiet man, and when he emerged from his solitude or communicated with other learned men, a companionable one. But it is significant that he was worried over his emotions and fled any company if he felt they might show too nakedly.

For the sake of argument, then, it may be conceded that Spinoza was often resentful, suspicious, and afraid of strong emotion. What does that have to do with his philosophy? He says that pity in itself is evil and unprofitable, and that repentance is not a virtue. (22) The free man, he says, destroys love and hate toward external causes, so that his mind will no longer fluctuate painfully. (23) He also, in his way, justifies the right of commonwealth to break contracts, of authorities to govern though in tyranny, and of kings to exercise full power over spiritual affairs. (24) Ironically, he also therefore justifies the suppression of prophets by rulers (25), on the same grounds of public order that were the excuse for execrating him and burning his books. Spinoza was the rebel who hates rebellion, who identifies himself often with authority and control, whether over private emotions or political passions. (26)

If Spinoza were able to prove his statements beyond doubt, we might safely forget his private character. But he does not and cannot prove, in the full sense of the word, that

22. *Ethic*, iv, props. 1, liv.

23. *Ethic*, v, prop ii.

24. *Tractatus Politicus*, chap 3; *Trac. Theo.-Pol.*, chap. 19.

pity is evil and that prophets should be suppressed, or that freedom from ordinary emotions is the wisest ideal. He may or may not be right, but the absence of complete proof must make us suppose that his philosophy is rationalization as much as reason.

Spinoza's very method is an evidence of the subjectivity it was designed to escape.

Because of medieval adumbrations, the great prestige of mathematics, and Descartes' initiative, the times were ripe for a philosophy of geometric form. (27) Yet Spinoza's aim in geometrizing is not beyond doubt. Since he wrote his summary of Descartes' *Principles* geometrically though acknowledging that he did not agree with much of its content (28), it seems that he could not have believed that geometric form alone conferred certainty. His aim might have been pedagogic clarity, but not clarity as mere ease, for he says at least once that it is easier to understand ungeometrical reasoning. (29)

But if the method lent neither ease nor certainty, why use it? I think the answer must be, as Meyer's preface to Spinoza's summary confirms, that definitions, self-evident axioms, and correct successive steps in reasoning really do have conclusions that are, in Meyer's words, "established beyond all chance of doubt." Complicated demonstrations might contain errors, but the form in which they were cast, Spinoza must have thought, made the errors easier to discover. There is no good reason for assuming that he did not believe his system to be rigorously correct in all essentials.

It is evident, however, that Spinoza was wrong. His *Ethic* is not unusually clear and has no mathematical cer-

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25. *Trac. Theo.-Pol.*, chap. 18, pp. 239-40.

26. Spinoza is said to have drawn himself in the guise of the famous Neapolitan rebel, Masaniello. This, if true, would be another evidence of the rebel in him. See J. H. Carp, "Spinoza/Masaniello," in *Spinozistisch Bulletin*, vol. ii, no. 1, Sept., 1939, pp. 14-18.

27. H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, vol. i, chap. 2.

28. A. Wolf, *The Correspondence of Spinoza*, London, 1928, p. 123. See also Meyer's preface to Spinoza's version of the *Principles*.

tainty. The criticisms that Pascal made of Descartes are equally relevant if applied to Spinoza: outside of geometry, which also must use undefined words and unproved primary propositions, no geometrical success is possible. For, as Pascal held, ordinary words have different meanings ("matter is by nature utterly incapable of thought" and "I think therefore I am" are *not* the same in St. Augustine and Descartes); and fact is so complicated that geometrical proofs of matters of fact would require an infinite number of intermediate steps. (30) For all its brave show and the intensive valor of its execution, the *Ethic* remains the kind of philosophy we have called vague, that is, neither really precise nor, therefore, entirely refutable by precise arguments.

Because Spinoza lived in the seventeenth century, the question may be unfair. Yet Pascal understood it, and we may ask (as Poincaré asked how error is possible in mathematics), "How is it that philosophers can mistake vague metaphysics for mathematics?" Spinoza gives a clue when he says, "I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if I were considering lines, planes, or bodies." (31) He wanted a dispassionate consideration of passion. He wanted cool words and precise organization to defend reason against its enemies. He was, in other words, defending himself against emotional assault from the outer world and against too emotional a self-expression—the same defenses he had built up in everyday life and voiced in his philosophy.

Now it is empirically known by psychologists that men who have deep unconscious fears of their own emotions defend themselves against themselves by precision, rule, and system, and that conversely, great precision, rule, and system, indicate a person afraid of himself. (32) Spinoza

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29. *Ethic*, iv, prop 18, schol.

30. Pascal, *Pensées*, Bk i; Caillet and Blankenagel, *Great Shorter Works of Pascal*, Philadelphia, 1947, pp. 189-202 ("The Mind of the Geometrician" and "The Art of Persuasion"). Leon Roth, in *Descartes Discourse on Method*, has an illuminating study of the background, nature, eclipse, and influence of Descartes "geometrical" method.

31. *Ethic*, iii, end of praef.

was such a person, and, characteristically, also escaped the precision of his system—in prefaces, appendices, and scholia, in which emotion violates the constraints of his order. If Spinoza was the only philosopher to have made the large-scale “geometrical” effort for which his time was ready, it is fair to assume that he had a particularly strong impulse to accomplish the task.

The nature of these remarks on Spinoza should not be misconstrued. As metaphysical poetry, Spinozism is unique and unassailable: a poem is not refuted nor a man's image of experience voided by disagreement with him. Nor do I mean to deny the courage and imagination with which Spinoza restored the unity of nature, so long broken in European philosophy. (33) Though we understand and apply the insight differently, we still believe that crippling emotions are mastered as well as they can be by admitting them into the light of reason. Nor do I mean that Spinoza's arguments should not be discussed in their own terms or in the terms of any other philosopher. But there comes a time when we want to know not merely *what* errors and unanalyzed assumptions Spinoza made, but also why, why historically and psychologically, he made them. We need be no more averse to applying these modes of explanation to him than he was in applying them to others. As might be expected, each type of analysis gives clues the other can pursue.

The remarks on Kant and Santayana can be briefer. Although each of the three philosophers has a different psychic constellation, the principles I wish to stress are similar.

The same investigator who assures us that Kant's phil-

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32. See any handbook of psychiatry or abnormal psychology on obsessions and compulsions. Obsessive traits occur widely among those who later become psychotic. For a Freudian view on obsession and compulsion see O. Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, New York, 1945, chap. 14 (especially pp. 284ff.). As Fenichel says, “compulsive thinking is not only abstract, it is also general, directed towards systematization and categorization.”

33. H. A. Wolfson, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, chap. 21.



osophy cannot be properly understood outside of the historical context that supplied its problems, says that there is no reason to think that Kant's experiences, "except in the strictly intellectual sphere, were of the slightest interest or importance; if they were, we shall certainly never know it, since his biographers could discover nothing but the most meagre trivialities to record of him." (34)

While it is hard to picture Kant climbing an unmetaphysical Everest, shooting unmetaphysical tigers, or acting the Don Juan, the judgment of what is and is not trivial varies. At least one pertinent question might be asked: is there anything in all this triviality that played a role in forming his abstract thought? If so, it is not trivial, or at least not the triviality that has only trivial results.

Perhaps because of Heine's amusing description of Kant, we first of all remember that he was so precise. How proud he was (how proud would we be!) of having arisen at five every morning for twenty years without ever a second summons (Lampe, who summoned him but had no awakener himself, had reason to be still more proud). He worked out a regular sequence for conversations at dinner. Especially as he grew old, his life became a ritual in which an irregularity, even a pair of scissors a few inches out of their usual place, caused him acute discomfort. A symbol of Kant's precision was his love for his watch. If he were in need, he said, it would be the last of his possessions he would sell. (35)

Precision and dogmatism are frequent allies, the body anticipating and repeating its customary paces, the mind its customary opinions. As Kant's fame lent him con-

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34. T. D. Weldon, *Introduction to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, Oxford, 1945, p. 1. The three fundamental biographical memoirs of Kant's life, all published in 1804, are by Borowski, Jachman, and Wasiansky. These were conveniently printed in one volume, to which my notes refer, edited by Felix Gross, Berlin, 1912. J. H. W. Stuckenberg's *The Life of Immanuel Kant*, London, 1882, gives a faithful description of Kant's personality drawn from these and other sources. Since the memoirs give the same general picture of Kant, I have not thought it necessary to document each of my statements on him.



fidence and his mind aged and hardened, he monopolized conversations, could not usually bear to hear others talk long, and grew impatient if anyone claimed to know anything at all better than he did. A clash between his opinion and a fact he might easily resolve in favor of the opinion. When Napoleon had already landed in Egypt, Kant persisted in his earlier theory that the French were really interested in conquering Portugal. The news of the landing was therefore, he held, a deception. (36) Because Fichte, who honored him greatly, had presumed to build higher on the basis of the "prolegomena to all future metaphysics," Kant (who relied on others' summaries of Fichte's writings) grew so angry that his guests were afraid to mention Fichte and the Fichteans in his presence. (37) Kant himself admitted his growing inability to understand the philosophy of others, even that of Montaigne, an earlier favorite of his. (38)

Although he was kindly, Kant must have been a difficult man to live with. As if in inward recognition of the difficulty, Kant, until he grew helpless with age, did not want any close friends. He did have friends and acquaintances, and his social position became high; but he did not want anyone to share his emotional life intimately. He remembered his mother with a loving gratitude, but was not interested in seeing his young brother or his sisters. He is said not to have spoken to the latter, who also lived in Königsberg, for twenty-five years. When, in his extreme old age, his younger sister was brought to help him, he recog-

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35. Wasiansky, p. 247. "Many compulsion neurotics have an exaggerated interest in all kinds of timetables. They may even regulate their entire life according to systematized timetables. As long as the timetable functions as the regulator of their activities, they are sure they are not committing the sins they are unconsciously afraid of. . . . 'Orientation in time' is a typical reassuring method. Many a fear of death is a fear of a state in which the usual conceptions of time are invalid. . . . Some patients find certain gross falsifications of facts compatible with their obsessive conscientiousness and exactness, and even with obsessive fanaticism for truth." (Fenichel, *op. cit.*, pp. 284, 285)

36. Wasiansky, p. 232; Stuckenberg pp. 140-41.

nized her only with difficulty and then immediately apologized for her lack of culture. (39) His social watchfulness that expressed itself in his clothing, which, except for the ancient hat, was always in the height of fashion, he rationalized as proper esteem for his fellowmen. The bareness and smoke-blackened walls of his rooms, on the other hand, were as they should be, he explained.

Such precision and self-containment are usually analyzed, as has been said, as the fear of one's own emotion and disorder. Significantly, Kant demonstrated and complained of his incurable tendency to digress in conversation and lecturing. (40) His ritual precision and love for system were intended cures that did not always work.

That Kant, whose influence on esthetics has been so great, disliked music, except, sometimes, military music, and was indifferent to pictorial art, may seem merely paradoxical. But he disliked music because it forced itself on his privacy: he could not shut his ears as he shut or averted his eyes. He also identified music with death, for he had been disagreeably stirred by the music played at a commemoration of the death of Moses Mendelssohn. (41)

Kant had a terrible fear of disease and death. His study of his personal health and of hygiene in general were expressed monotonously in his talk. Every week he studied the most recent mortality statistics, which his friend, the police chief, sent him. He grew afraid of sweating, and when out walking took care to stay in the cool shadows and never to hurry. He grew afraid of the electricity in the air. When old and weak he said he longed for death but would never take his own life. Kant hated suicide so greatly that

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37. Stuckenberg, p. 418. Kant was also often modest and undomineering, as well as generous. The worse traits became accentuated as he aged; but such accentuations follow the pattern that has already been established. On Kant's relations with his critics see J. Maréchal, *Le Point de départ de la métaphysique*, cahier IV, *Le Système idéaliste chez Kant et les postkantians*, Brussels and Paris, 1947, pp. 166-224.

38. Stuckenberg, p. 137

39. Jachmann, Ninth Letter, pp. 170ff.

40. Stuckenberg, p. 121.

his chivalrous feelings were blunted and he said that one ought to spit in the face of a person who committed suicide. (42) It is in the light of his desire for death and his hatred of suicide (the fear that he might effectuate his desire) that his argument against suicide (43) should be judged.

Although Kant believed that the morality of an act cannot be judged by the pleasure it gives, he thought that "tormenting consciences in the long run become dulled and ultimately cease to function." (44) As a generalization this statement is false, though with the addition of the word "reasonably" to its end it might be true. Kant's own conscience seems to have been and remained of the tormenting sort. To the last he remembered the time he had pretended to be invited somewhere else in order to escape a disagreeable invitation. (45) He knew he had lived an honorable life, but toward the end he said, and we can savor the bitterness, that for no price would he be willing to live his life over again just as he had lived it. (46) Could his theory of life prolonged forever to redress the earthly balance have consoled him? The emotions he had so long restrained returned and tormented him in nightmares. And these nightmares, though more fearful, had not been unknown to the Kant who had often repeated that if one were to say and write all one thought, "there would be nothing more horrible on God's earth than man." (47) Kant was never reconciled to his unhappiness or his humanity.

Kant was unhappy and self-divided. Whether the doctrine is true or not, he was peculiarly fitted to discover that morality is duty alone, no matter how thwarting; for he was

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41. Jachmann, Tenth Letter, pp. 173-74; Borowsky, pp. 88-89; Stuckenberg, pp. 142-43.

42. Stuckenberg, p. 442; Wasiansky, p. 243.

43. *Lectures on Ethics*, trans. L. Infield, "Suicide," pp. 148ff; *Metaphysik der Sitten*, ed. Karl Vorlander (1922), pp. 268-70.

44. *Lectures on Ethics*, pp. 134-35.

45. Stuckenberg, note 132, p. 466.

46. *Op cit.*, p. 424.

47. *Op. cit.*, note 133, p. 466.

moral and intellectually satisfied in his morality, but not happy. Similarly, he was well fitted by his suspicion of emotion and his coolness or aversion to art (except poetry) to defend the thesis that "interested" pleasure is irrelevant to esthetic judgment. It may have been the science and philosophy of his epoch that led him to believe that there was either a rigid and necessary cause and effect or, if not, then chaos; but it was not that alone that made him at once so ritualistically systematic and so skeptical and yet believing. He himself hovered commandingly, yet how impotently! over his impulsive chaos. His philosophy is another partial instance, as all instances are only partial, of philosophy in the image of the philosopher. (48) His difficulties may have been the necessary stigmata of genius, but if the stigmata may show themselves in the absence of genius, we may be optimistic enough to hope that genius may show itself in their absence. (49)

Santayana was far more aware of himself psychologically than either Spinoza or Kant, and not merely, I think, because he lived later. His description of his own nature is

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48. T. D. Weldon, in his *Introduction to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 204, holds that "Kant's weakest point was his readiness to take for granted without serious question the ultimate character of the disjunctions both in physics and ethics which contemporary thought accepted." My thesis is, of course, that the historical causes were mingled with and utilized by more personal ones.

49. In the endless debate on genius and psychic health, different sides are taken by W. Lange-Eichbaum, *Genie, Irrsinn und Ruhm*, 3rd ed., Munich, 1942, and G. Révész, *Talent und Genie*, Bern, 1952, the former claiming that geniuses tend to be psychically unhealthy. However, he also holds the view that we tend to identify as geniuses those who combine great ability with neuroticism or near-psychosis, so that if we choose "geniuses" for their neuroticism it is no wonder that we find them to be neurotic. Relatively careful statistics on the relation of genius and mental instability have been gathered by Adele Juda, in *Höchstbegabung*, Munch-Berlin, 1953; and relatively careful observation of creative artists and scientists has been carried out in the United States by Anne Roe. The work of both of these psychologists suggests some positive relation between great creativity and an unstable, or at least troubled psyche.

precise and bears the earmarks of truth, though of an incomplete one. His mother and father lived apart, he tells us, in two different worlds. His father was at once courageous and hypochondriachal, the pleasures he enjoyed mixed with bitterness and shadowed by guilt. His mother emphasized a conventional refinement, and she never spoke of the father with enthusiasm or deference.

In his boyhood in America, Santayana was intense, solitary, and unhappy, and so learned to live in a dreaming that became a conscious principle when he underwent what he calls his "platonic transition." Through its conventional rhetoric, the poetry he wrote at the time shows great pain and self-alienation. In one poem he imagines death and final peace, "all life's losses cancelled by life's loss"; in another he stands aside bewildered from the plenitude of sorrow. Always he is aware that his contemplative separation conceals an aggrandizing love:

. . . O ye beauties I must never see

How great a lover you have lost in me. (50)

The platonic transition, says Santayana, was a turning of the disaster of his life into a rapture without false comforts. His best friend, Warwick Potter, died unexpectedly, and Santayana's feeling of separation brimmed over, unwilling and irrevocable separation from every place, and from his youth and his religion. (51) Santayana wanted the solitude of the philosopher who watches the transactions of the marketplace without entering into them. He separated his ranging spirit from "an ugly town, a stinted family, a common school," and from the most troublesome of all, the animalistic, "compulsive and self-tormenting creature called 'Me.' " (52a) And so Santayana, to whom experience became in contemplation a play of essences to which animal belief attached its own meanings, many of them equally possible and equally arbitrary, learned to take existence with a muted gladness, though its end was near-blindness and stomach cancer.

Like Spinoza and Kant, Santayana illustrates what is so often true of philosophers, that they begin in separation

from the world. (52b) Then their unwilling loneliness becomes a willed and creative loneliness, sometimes enough to bring fame and pleasure and thus compensate for itself. But the compensation is never complete, for philosophers, as exemplified by the three we have discussed, remain separated from the world by the same rationality that joins them to it. They have elaborated a consciousness that explains and includes everyone else, but that keeps them, its makers and creatures, the more distantly unique.

From the more positive point of view, the whole argument of this essay may be summarized in eight points:

1. Psychology may be able to make factual contributions to current philosophical discussion. The search for useful psychological knowledge is likely to be more rewarding than the isolation that rests on the a priori idea that facts and philosophy cannot impregnate one another. That the evidence for psychological conclusions is often far from rigorous should not provoke a philosopher to horror and distance. (53) Philosophers are exhilarated by frontiers. The separateness of the two fields can best be decided by intimate exploration of both.

2. Philosophy tries to penetrate intellectually into experience. It therefore has a natural reason to be concerned with psychological grounds for philosophical assumptions and for the choices we make among alternate lines of argument. It is true that psychology makes assumptions the na-

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50. Santayana, *Poems*, New York, 1923, Sonnets ix, xi, xxi.

51. Santayana, *My Host the World*, New York, 1952, p. 8.

52a *Op. cit.*, pp. 134-35.

52b This statement is no substitute for a typology of philosophers. Men such as Dewey may represent an opposite pole — though everyone achieves his identity through a separation-in-unity. Great philosophers seem uncommonly separated. A. Herzberg, in his superficial *Psychology of Philosophers*, London, 1929, pp. 70-71, estimates that of the thirty philosophers he singles out as great, fifteen remained unmarried, six married very late, two separated from their wives, four were drastically unhappy in marriage, and the remaining seven may have been well married.



ture of which philosophy may clarify, but this is not fatal to our argument. We do examine assumptions by shifting to other sets, and we do sometimes examine assumptions in the light of conclusions that partly rest on them. This circular procedure is justified by the fact that human knowledge is piecemeal and is gained by methods that are not completely acceptable from a rigoristic intellectual standpoint, which is subject to its own very similar paradoxes.

3. Most philosophy is vague and partially irrefutable. It does not therefore remain impenetrable to analysis. To interpret vague philosophy, we need not reach an esthetic identification with its author, but we must understand his psychic aims. Knowledge of aims will clarify his vocabulary, his arguments, and his conclusions.

4. Psychological understanding, since it identifies points of psychic strain, on which the forces that need rationalization bear most heavily, enables us to discover where errors or unreasonable emphases occur. Reason is too weak to flourish unless it creates favorable conditions for itself.

5. Since philosophy is concerned as much with persuasion as with self-expression, it is wise, as Aristotle emphasized, to know the man we are persuading and how he reacts to our reactions. This is no matter of cynical rhetoric. To talk comprehensibly we need more than English and logic.

6. When we understand psychic behavior, we understand why we ourselves are persuaded or antagonized. We

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53. Sometimes the atmosphere in psychological discussions, especially on depth psychology, should be familiar to the philosopher. He will find much the same inconclusiveness of evidence, semantic difficulties, and war of schools, as he finds in philosophy. But though reminiscent, the discussion is not negligible. He will also find conscientious reasoning, sharp analysis, and courageous exploring. Those interested in the verification of psychoanalysis will find a sober accounting in *Psychoanalysis as Science*, by Hilgard, Kubie, and Pumpian-Mindlin, Stanford University Press, 1952. There is a philosophically oriented but far more personal statement in *The Collected Papers of Otto Fenichel, First Series*, New York, 1953, pp. 8-28 ("Psychoanalysis and Metaphysics").



can then make our responses more nearly rational. We can neither deny that we are subjective nor affirm that subjectivity has no degrees.

7. Fantasies and dreams are premonitions of philosophy. Their study should be particularly fertile to those with phenomenological or existentialistic tendencies, but they can be a source of philosophic insight to anyone, for they are a unique form of self-experience. (54) The conventional question in philosophy, "How do I know that I am, or am not dreaming?" can be transformed to "What do I know in dreaming?"

8. It is important, as everyone admits, to distinguish the esthetic and irrefutable side of philosophy from the factual and refutable. It is also important, and to some degree possible, to distinguish the more from the less sane and healthy. Psychology may coerce no one into final preferences, but it can point out the attitudes that frustrate their own professed aims.

What is the conclusion of these conclusions?

Spinoza and Kant had great constructive intellects and extraordinary imaginations; Santayana had his feet on the earth and his head in poetry, and he was almost invincibly civilized: what can we gain by pointing out that these three were also human? The gain is a moral that must be experienced to be accepted. The philosopher is a man who makes himself lonely, and then from himself as its center he grows a world into which he invites the passers-by, who enter until they are encompassed and see in the vision of its creator. This is what the poet does in his more spasmodic, intuitive, concentrated, metaphorical, and melodic way. And this, too, is the act of the insane creator of worlds, who is sometimes so hypnotically powerful that great masses of men live in him until reality, whatever it may or may not be, kills him and they emerge puzzled into another and perhaps wiser light.

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54. See, e.g., the rich materials in the two volumes of Hans Kunz, *Die Anthropologische Bedeutung der Phantasie*, Basel, 1946.

Philosophy and insanity are alike, both of them exacerbations of vision. The parallel is inevitable, for both philosophy and insanity, when it constructs universes, are impulse nurtured by reason. Both have their analytic cunning, their sensitivity to subterranean structures and to experience grown invisible through familiarity. But if philosophy is the reflection of the real, insanity is its mirage in which the thirst for water is answered by a renewed desert of sand. How distinguish the reality from its mirage? Our senses are weak and our suspicions hard to control efficiently. If we did not have proofs that we can learn and grow wiser, we might consider ourselves caught in a doorless circle. For self-knowledge rests on psychology, and psychology requires logic, and logic in its human origin and uses is understood through psychology. There is no single, wholly sufficient starting point from which to know and act. There is no philosopher's stone. There are only the unremitting circular effort and the astonishing glimpses of success.

The success comes in more ways than one. It comes from a fanatical concentration on relevancy, from mathematics and physics. And it comes, sometimes in the same person, from an uninhibited curiosity. Thought that proceeds along one dimension alone is least able to forego the creative multidimensionality of thought. Otherwise it may too easily come to a dead halt, away from its sources and unable to discover any of the clues scattered with such profusion in the chaos out of which it slowly found its way. Objectivity at its limit and not aware of or not interested in the mind, the person, and the history in which it lives is also not sane, because it rejoices grievously in the withering of its own roots. Pascal said this truly, better than he could know. (55) We say the word and then begin to discover what it means:

"It is dangerous to make man see too clearly his equality with the brutes without showing him his greatness. It is also dangerous to make him see his greatness too clearly, apart from his vileness. It is still more dangerous to leave him in ignorance of both. But it is very advantageous to show

him both. Man must not think that he is on a level either with the brutes or with the angels, nor must he be ignorant of both sides of his nature; but he must know himself."

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55. *Pensées*, no. 418, trans. W. F. Trotter.

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# The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States

by

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May, 1956, marks the centenary of the birth of Sigmund Freud. The movement for which he is remembered, psychoanalysis, now for all practical purposes makes its home in America. Yet, curiously, none of the historians of the various aspects of psychoanalysis seems to have discovered the first report published in the United States of the work of Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud on hysteria, out of which grew psychoanalysis. (1) The notice, by William James, appeared in 1894 in the "Psychological Literature" section of the third issue of *The Psychological Review*.

James, who was trained as a physician, was much interested in psychopathology, which he regarded as a vital part of psychology along with psychical research, and he recognized the work of Breuer and Freud running in the *Neurologisches Centralblatt* in 1893 as an "important paper." (2) This notice appeared following a more extensive review prepared by James of a paper by Janet, and he devoted only a paragraph to Breuer and Freud, seeing the significance of their work primarily as "an independent corroboration of Janet's views." James mentioned the memories of shocks that "fall" into the "subliminal consciousness," where they could be discovered only in a "hypnoid" state. Breuer and Freud worked out these "thorns in the spirit," in James' happy phrase, by means of hypnotism. (3)

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1. Freud already had some reputation in America as a neurologist; e.g., see Sigmund Freud, *Autobiography*, translated by James Strachey (New York, 1935), 17.
  2. *The Psychological Review*, I (1894), 199; Ralph Barton Perry, *The*

Another alert man who early picked up the Breuer-Freud work was the distinguished New England physician, Robert T. Edes, who mentioned it in a lecture before the Massachusetts Medical Society on June 11, 1895. He, too, saw the Viennese method as one of hypnotism, but he also noted that talking out the history of a submerged irritating incident was equally important. His lecture was clearly pioneering in psychosomatic medicine. To illustrate the Breuer-Freud ideas of suppression he cited the homely example of "when a lower official received from his superior an insult which he could not resent." Edes concluded that "There should be a proper balance between inflow of irritations and the outflow of motor energy." (4) Edes' was virtually the only recognition of the Breuer-Freud studies in the United States when they appeared in book form.

In the same year, 1895, B. Onuf (Onufrowicz), an institutional neurologist, abstracted for Smith Ely Jelliffe's *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* in a more or less routine way one of the important articles that Freud wrote in 1894 in which he introduced the idea of teleology in the suppression of ideas into the subconscious realms. Onuf in the abstract, translating the title as "The Warding-Off Neuro Psychoses," described the phenomenon of conver-

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**Thought and Character of William James** (2 vols., Boston, 1935), II, 5.

3. James, *loc. cit.* There is very strong internal evidence that James' series of abstracts grew out of his reading of the Englishman, Frederic W. H. Myers, "The Subliminal Consciousness. Chapter VI. The Mechanism of Hysteria," *Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research*, IX (1893), 3-25, especially 12, 14-16. Myers also referred to the Breuer-Freud paper as "important," and he gave a more extended notice of it than did James. Smith Ely Jelliffe said that E. E. Southard, who was a Harvard undergraduate, mentioned that James discussed the Breuer-Freud studies as early as 1894 in his lectures at Harvard. C. P. Oberndorf, *A History of Psychoanalysis in America* (New York, 1953), 41n.
4. Robert T. Edes, *The New England Invalid* (Boston, 1895), especially 16-17, 38; see also Edward Stainbrook, "Psychosomatic Medicine in the Nineteenth Century," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, XIV (1952), 224.

sion, whereby an affect of a painful or disagreeable experience is transferred into the physical sphere (hysteria) or psychical area (compulsory ideas). Onuf summarized two cases in illustration. Freud believed, the abstracter noted, that usually the original "painful or disagreeable impression arose in the sexual sphere" and that the ultimate symptom could in some way be associated with the sexual. Onuf also noted a type of case in which the patient forgets entirely a given painful experience and believes to be true that which he wishes to be true. (5) In the years following, Onuf wrote abstracts openly sympathetic with Freud and took an especial interest in forwarding psychoanalysis in this country.

A sure sign of the future came in 1896 when the *Journal of the American Medical Association* abstracted Freud's paper containing a more complete and radical formulation of his ideas on the etiology of hysteria, consisting of "conscious or unconscious memories of sexual occurrences in early childhood" and "an effort of the will to throw off some haunting idea." The *Journal* made no further comment, but C. H. Hughes, the editor of *The Alienist and Neurologist*, quoted the entire abstract "only to condemn the absurdity of such wildly conjectural, unproved and unprovable conclusions." Hughes was offended chiefly by Freud's assertions concerning the sexual element in causing hysteria, interpreting sexual behavior in a sense narrower than Freud's. Hysteria was due to constitutional organic weakness, said Hughes. It is interesting that he recognized in the abstract the essence of Freud's idea, for he observed, "The unconscious memories are conceded as pathogenic displays but not necessarily pathogenic power." (6)

Freud's work occasioned little comment after 1896. What notice Americans did take of it followed in the patterns of the abstract of Onuf or, more rarely, the denunciation of Hughes. Medical literature did contain some references to Freud's "anxiety neurosis," which, more than any

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5. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, XXII (1895), 129.

dynamic viewpoint, was of interest as a symptom complex to the nosological psychiatry and neurology of the turn of the century. (7) In 1906 a new era opened when Morton Prince, the distinguished Boston psychopathologist, brought out the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, where the word, "psychoanalysis," appeared for the first time in the United States. (8) After 1906, a great deal of previously latent interest in the new ideas developed, and psychoanalysis in America grew in a way that William James' modest paragraph of 1894 scarcely foreshadowed.

6. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, XXVII (1896), 393; C. H. Hughes, "Etiology of Hysteria," *The Alienist and Neurologist*, XVII (1896), 519-520.
7. E.g., C. B. Farrar, abstract of *La Névrose d'Angoisse* (Paris, 1902), in *American Journal of Insanity*, LIX (1902), 175-177.
8. James Jackson Putnam, "Recent Experiences in the Study and Treatment of Hysteria at the Massachusetts General Hospital; With Remarks on Freud's Method of Treatment by 'Psycho-analysis,'" *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, I (1906), 26-41. Priority might also be claimed by Sidney I. Schwab, "Review of Neurology and Psychiatry," *Interstate Medical Journal*, XIII (1906), 144.

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# The Animal Theme and Totemism in Franz Kafka

by

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i.

We are still a long way from understanding and appreciating Franz Kafka. The conclusive book on him has not yet been written and will not be written until all of his work has been published. Despite the great mass of essays on the author, (1) most of them very vague in nature, and Max Brod's reminiscences and interpretations, his world is thickly veiled. There is in particular one theme which has so far escaped accurate and detailed analysis: the animal theme. There are in his writings countless references to animals, human-animal comparisons, allusions to animal life, fables, and animal motifs; there are important works in which the human person has been transformed into an animal, or vice versa. There are hardly any stories in which Kafka did not include at least one significant reference to creatures of the animal kingdom. And we constantly wonder about their meaning and place in the writer's cosmos. What is, for example, the significance of such a story as "Die Verwandlung," (2) in which Gregor Samsa wakes up one morning to find himself transformed into a vermin? And if we think we may perhaps have the meaning — why did Kafka choose an animal in order to express it? What was his relation to the animal kingdom?

At first, quite weighty indication of the import of the animal theme in Kafka's works we find in his diaries. One June 2, 1916, Kafka notes: "Aus 'Das Werden des Gottesglaubens' von N. Söderblom, Erzbischof von Upsala, ganz wissenschaftlich, ohne persönliche oder religiöse Teilnahme." (3) The Swedish cleric and anthropologist Nathan Söder-

blom had published the book to which the note refers in Germany in 1915. It is a well-known anthropological treatise on "primitive" religion (4) of the Australian tribes and on the faith of such complex societies as the ancient Chinese and Jewish civilizations. This book interested Kafka immensely, as the lengthy quotations from it in the writer's diary suggest, and it offers a clue to certain locked aspects of his work. Kafka has been interpreted from almost every possible angle, mainly however from the theological by Max Brod, and more recently from the psychoanalytical by Paul Goodman and Charles Neider, but also from the politico-social by Edwin Berry Burgum and the Protestant-existentialist by John Kelley, (5) yet never thoroughly from an anthropological viewpoint for which it is also necessary to consult psychoanalytical sources on primitive religion. (6) The book by Söderblom can assist us in this task. When Kafka read it, he was also deeply interested in the writings of Kierkegaard; and the entries following the notes on the Swedish anthropologist are concerned with themes from the Old Testament.

One thing stands out above any other in Kafka's quotations from *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*: The phenomenon of totemism. The quotations are: (7)

Urgottheit der Mesai: wie er das erste Vieh vom Himmel an einem Lederriemen in den ersten Kraal hinunterlässt. Urgottheit einiger australischer Stämme: er kam als mächtiger Medizinmann vom Westen, machte Menschen, Tiere, Bäume, Flüsse, Gebirge, setzte die heiligen Zeremonien ein und bestimmte, aus welchem Clan ein Mitglied eines bestimmten anderen Clans sein Weib nehmen sollte. Als er fertig war, ging er davon. Die Medizinmänner können an einem Baum oder Seil zu ihm hinaufsteigen und Kraft holen. Bei andern: während ihrer schöpferischen Wanderungen führten sie auch hie und da zum erstenmal die heiligen Tänze und Riten aus. Bei andern: die Menschen schufen selbst in der Urzeit die Totentiere durch Ausübung der Zeremonien. Die heiligen Riten brachten also selbst den Gegenstand, auf den sie gerichtet sind, hervor. Die Bimbiga nahe der Küste kennen zwei Männer, welche in der Urzeit auf ihren Wanderungen Quellen, Waldungen und Zeremonien schufen.

We know now that Kafka was well informed on totemism in general and animal totemism in particular. Although he had written stories with animal themes before he read Söderblom ("Die Verwandlung" for instance was finished in 1912), the impact on Kafka of reading explicitly on totemism should not be underestimated; at least his acquaintance with totemism may have functioned as a confirmation that the human and the animal are related in a metaphysical and religious way.

ii.

There are four distinguishable major groups in Kafka's writings as far as the animal theme is concerned.

(1) A human being is transformed, or wishes to be transformed, into an animal, or an animal is transformed into a human being. "Die Verwandlung" is the most important example of this theme. Here, Gregor Samsa is transformed into, and dies as, a vermin. In "Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande," the hero, Raban, wants to stay in bed and be changed into a bug in order to escape certain responsibilities. Dr. Bucephalus, the new advocate in "Der neue Advokat," was formerly the battle horse of Alexander the Great, as his name suggests. (8)

(2a) An animal allusion is made to suggest partial or complete identification of a human being with the animal. Since the following examples are taken from Kafka's diaries (and letters, 2b), they should have great weight as "confessional" indications and as a supplement to the references to the writer's literary works made above. In his diaries, we find among other allusions: "mich aus mir heraus zeitweilig gehört, wie das Winseln einer jungen Katze" (May 17/18, 1910, p. 14); "Einen Augenblick lang fühlte ich mich umpanzert" (February 21, 1911, p. 44), a remark which reminds one of the "armor" of the vermin in "Die Verwandlung"; when Kafka speaks of his literary work (August 20, 1911, p. 60), he mentions his "fishlike feeling," as if to say that only "under water" (in his work) can he be happy; "Ich träumte heute von einem windhundartigen

Esel," Kafka reports and he states that he did not like the donkey's narrow human feet (October 28, 1911, p. 125). In these four odd cases we may perhaps speak of "reminiscences" of atavistic experiences, coming up, suddenly, from the unconscious to the conscious level of the mind, experiences which — as the psychologists assure us — are more vivid in us, mainly in the states of trance and dreams, than we are ordinarily inclined to believe. Kafka's artistic world was a dream world, and even when he referred consciously to the reality of the social world around him and his social relationships — as in the following cases — he was anything but "realistic" in the common meaning of the word, as for example when he reports: "Schon früher dachte ich daran, bei den Kanarienvögeln fällt es mir aber von neuem ein, ob ich nicht die Türe bis zu einem kleinen Spalte öffnen, schlangengleich ins Nebenzimmer kriechen und so auf dem Boden meine Schwestern und ihr Fräulein um Ruhe bitten sollte" (November 5, 1911, p. 141). Kafka was, like Proust, highly audiosensitive, and here the singing of the canaries in the living room of the Kafka family in Prague reminds him of the possibility of creeping into that room and asking for quietude — like a snake, or like a vermin which, in "Die Verwandlung," does in fact creep and look into the family living-room. In another case of self-humiliation, the author confesses: "Im Grunde bin ich ein unfähiger, unwissender Mensch, der . . . gerade imstande wäre, in einer Hundehütte zu hocken, hinauszuspringen, wenn ihm Frass gereicht wird, und zurückzuspringen, wenn er es verschlungen hat" (November 18, 1913, p. 329). The next day, he notes: "Ich bin wirklich wie ein verlorenes Schaf in der Nacht und im Gebirge oder wie ein Schaf, das diesem Schaf nachläuft. So Verloren zu sein und nicht die Kraft haben, es zu beklagen." Kafka splits himself in two, as in other instances quoted above, as if to indicate that he has, at times, lost control over his mind and that one ego chases the other ego in moments of extreme non-orientation, or even depersonalization, and despair. Of the first beginnings of his absorbing unhappiness, the writer says in retrospect: "Sie kamen angeflogen

wie Fliegen und wären so leicht wie sie zu vertreiben gewesen'' (January 24, 1922, p. 562). But like the Erinyes, snaky-haired avengers of murder and inflictors of madness, and like a conscience troubled with guilt and inferiority, Kafka's flies — like the flies of Orestes in Sartre's *Les Mouches* — came neither accidentally nor actually from outside; they were born in the writer's soul and continued to pursue his soul until it yielded to a form of madness and punishment. For Kafka's problem was the feeling of profound guilt which he derived from his father's superiority, as we shall see. The author, well read in Greek, Hebrew, and German mythology, probed deeply in his own modern mythology and symbolism. On October 7, 1915, we find, e.g., the following strange allusion: "Als Hinkender die Gerti erschreckt, das Schreckliche des Pferdefusses" (p. 484). The devil's hoof means, of course, sin, a symbol which Kleist used so effectively in *Der Zerbrochene Krug*. We have here, also, for the first time an indication of Kafka's tendency to act and imitate, with a deeper meaning behind the mere process of imitation — a feature which we have occasion to deal with extensively further in this paper.

(2b) In his letters to Milena, (9) the woman Kafka loved unhappily in his later years and who was a much more domineering person than the fragile author, he again compares himself with animals in very humiliating forms, e.g.: "es ist nur das, dass man diesen schmalen Weg aus der dunklen Wohnung hinaus zu Dir mit solcher Freude gegraben hat und dass sich allmählich alles, was man ist, mit hineingeworfen hat in diesen vielleicht . . . zu Dir führenden Gang, der aber plötzlich statt an Dich an den undurchdringlichen Stein Bitte-fahre-nicht stösst, so dass man jetzt wieder mit allem, was man ist, diesen Gang, den man so schnell gegraben hat, langsam zurückwandern und zuschütten muss. . . . Am Ende macht man schon wieder neue Gänge, man, alter Maulwurf" (pp. 164-165). His relations to Milena were blocked by various unfavorable circumstances, upon which the preceding and the following letters reflect in regard to the couple's geographical separation and, in

the letter after that, in regard to Milena's husband. "Die Voraussetzung der 7 Stunden ist allerdings, dass ich die Nacht vorher (keine leichte Aufgabe) ein wenig geschlafen habe, sonst hast Du vor Dir nur ein armes krankes Tier" (p. 185). And: "In der Atmosphäre Deines Zusammenlebens mit ihm bin ich wirklich nur die Maus im 'grossen Haushalt', der man höchstens einmal im Jahr erlauben kann, offen quer über den Teppich zu laufen" (p. 117). In another of these strange, masochistic, very untraditional "billets-doux," Kafka comments on, and complains about, his unsatisfactory situation in life: "Warum kann man sich nicht damit abfinden, dass in dieser ganz besonderen, hinhaltend selbstmörderischen Spannung zu leben das Richtige ist. . . , sondern lockert sie mutwillig, fährt aus ihr hinaus wie ein unvernünftiges Tier (und liebt gar noch wie ein Tier diese Unvernunft)" (p. 209). Like a fixed idea, the beast dwells in Kafka's thoughts. It is as if an obsession has taken possession of a mind reared in civilization but incapable of escaping a compelling preoccupation with nature uncivilized. "Milena," Kafka breaks out, ". . . bin ich ein so böses Tier, böse gegen mich und genau so böse gegen dich. . . ?" He answers: "Es ist etwa so: ich, Waldtier, war ja damals kaum im Wald, lag irgendwo in einer schmutzigen Grube. . . , da sah ich Dich draussen im Freien, . . . ich duckte mich bei Dir nieder, . . . aber im Grunde war ich doch nur das Tier, gehörte doch nur in den Wald. . ." And he concludes: "wirkliche wie ein irregangenes Tier (pp. 223-224.) The animal from the wood which bows and scrapes like a stray dog. . . Self-humiliation here reaches a point which passes over into self-flagellation, (10) which seems in Kafka's cases just as metaphysically conditioned as, for example, in the medieval flagellant's case; for there is, along with a masochistic pleasure in pain, a sad happiness which arises from the wish to go back to the state of the sub- or unconscious, to that country from which no traveller returns. "Den Tod wollen, die Schmerzen aber nicht, das ist ein schlechtes Zeichen. Sonst aber kann man den Tod wagen. Man ist eben als biblische Taube aus-



geschickt worden, hat nichts Grünes gefunden und schlüpft nun wieder in die dunkle Arche" (p. 235). Pain should be endured as Kafka did endure it; only when this has been accomplished, then one may go a step further, because it is only then after one has proven himself capable of enduring pain that one may take his own life. Otherwise, without first enduring pain, free death would not be free but an act of cowardice and superficial escape. To endure life, however, also means to endure — anti-Semitism. "Das Heldentum, das darin besteht, doch zu bleiben [in Prague, despite anti-Semitism] ist jenes der Schaben, die auch nicht aus dem Badezimmer auszurotten sind" (p. 240).

(3) Animals as obvious symbols (11) (of course, the symbolic character of animals in Kafka's works is always obvious, but sometimes they have, in addition, human features, whereas in other instances they have none and function solely allegorically). In "In unserer Synagoge," the little animal seems to indicate the deity. "Der Riesenmaulwurf," another example of the motif of the mole, again serves only as a pretext for a lengthy discussion on our most vital, yet "camouflaged" subject: religion. A mole-like creature dwells in the underground passages of the story "Der Bau." The meaning here, as in other transformations, seems to be clear: Kafka chose the animal to point out his, or his creature's, wish for complete isolation. The mole, in any case, slowly evolves as something like a *leitmotif*. Another animal which we encounter quite often in the writer is the horse. There is, besides Alexander's battle horse, a horse in "Ein Landarzt" which dies the night before the doctor has an urgent visit to make and which is mysteriously replaced by two new horses; they cover the distance to the patient miraculously fast and the distance home aequally miraculously slowly. In the sketch "Der Aufbruch" it is the horse which leads the hero "away from here," and it is simply this "away from here" which is described as the man's goal. (12) That this goal might be death, is easily possible though Kafka remains obscure here as well as in other cases.



(4) References to creatures which indicate the special significance Kafka attributes to them. In his diaries, the author quotes from a letter of Löwy to his (Löwy's) father: "Wenn ich nach Warschau komme, werde ich in meinen europäischen Kleidern zwischen euch herumgehen wie 'eine Spinne vor den Augen, wie ein Trauernder unter Brautleuten'" (November 22, 1911, p. 172). Apart from the fact that Kafka liked to contrast the Western Jews with the Eastern Jews, there is no special reason here why he should quote this particular passage unless he took special pleasure in the way those relations were expressed. (13) Then our author relates an incident of a soldier who, in World War I, returns from the front: "Geschichte vom Maulwurf, der im Schützengraben unter ihm bohrte und den er für ein göttliches Zeichen ansah, von dort wegzurücken. Kaum war er fort, traf ein Schuss einen Soldaten, der ihm nachgekrochen war und sich jetzt über dem Maulwurf befand" (November 4, 1914, p. 442). The story of the giant mole, mentioned above, serves very well as a commentary here, and we see Kafka's own spiritual beliefs, his own "primitive" religion crop up between the lines of his diary. Again the mole! The role of this animal can hardly any longer be considered accidental in the writer's work. On October 7, 1915, we have an entry which reminds us strongly of Nietzsche: "Gestern in der Niklasstrasse ein gestürztes Pferd mit blutigem Knie. Ich schaue weg und mache unbeherrscht Grimassen am hellen Tag" (p. 484). (14) Nietzsche, more advanced in his mental illness than Kafka in his poor physical and nervous condition, fell weeping around the horse's neck (in Turin), whereas Kafka tried to overcome his sympathy with the suffering creature by looking away and finding something like an abreaction in making grimaces. Sympathy, a strong inclination toward *identification* with someone suffering, was always one of Kafka's main emotions; Max Brod has told us of many instances of the writer's sympathy with people suffering in war, or famine, and especially with those who came for help to the insurance company in Prague for which Kafka worked. (15)

## iii.

That Kafka was always a thorough and immensely accurate observer of life around him — a fact with which it is convenient to start our interpretation of the initial and eventual impact of the animal on Kafka — has been stated repeatedly and can be verified by simply looking at the work of our writer. (16) His style was always clear, often even pedantic because of a mass of detail. How discerning a man the hypersensitive German-Jewish writer was, is illustrated by the following two passages from his diary which we choose for their references to animals. "Ein Teil der Niklasstrasse und die ganze Brücke dreht sich gerührt nach einem Hund um, der laut bellend ein Automobil der Rettungsgesellschaft begleitet. Bis der Hund plötzlich ablässt, umkehrt und sich als ein gewöhnlicher fremder Hund zeigt, der mit der Verfolgung des Wagens nichts Besonderes meinte" (May 27, 1912, p. 279). And the other impressionist note: "Wie von zwei Pferden im Lauf das eine den Kopf für sich und aus dem Lauf heraus senkt und gegen sich mit der ganzen Mähne schüttelt, dann ihn aufrichtet und jetzt erst, scheinbar gesünder, den Lauf wieder aufnimmt, den es eigentlich nicht unterbrochen hat" (June 6, 1912, pp. 279-280). Observation, however, for Kafka is more than just a value in itself: it is coupled with a fascination in the thing observed, and there is, of course, the pleasure of the artist in life around him. Kafka's sight, we know, was better developed than his hearing; it was perhaps the most appreciative of his senses. The theater was quite naturally closer to him than music. He was a "seer" in the double meaning of the word, and Neider even calls him, in psychoanalytic fashion, a "voyeur". His art was vision and observation. He admired Goethe, "den Augenschmenschen," but could not tell a modern operetta from a classical symphony. Light struck him more deeply than sound, sound was more or less noise and consequently caused dismay.

Accordingly, Kafka, the observer, was a superb imitator.

His vision led to be the art of the stage, as critic and spectator, and to imitation. He kept imitation and acting apart, however, saying, "Mein Nachahmungstrieb hat nichts Schauspielerisches" (*Tagebücher*, December 30, 1911, p. 219). His technique, or magic gift, of imitation had little artistic meaning as such; rather, it was a psychic phenomenon which drove simply toward full absorption of the imitated object. He defines it as immensely "striking" and claims that there is no room left in his mind to observe this process of imitation. (17) An actor, we know, is able to control himself while on the stage and acting; he is never fully in trance. Kafka, on the other hand, is in a trance when he imitates and remembers only later what has happened. Thus, imitation for the writer is a magic act. In this act, Kafka is substituted by the imitated object. This process goes beyond rational understanding and must be called demonic. We can only comprehend it in the writer's own description of the process, as in the numerous examples given here when Kafka speaks of himself as being an animal. This power of imitation is at the same time an obsession, a compulsion "neurosis" and beyond Kafka's own power of control. It is his "fate". It is, anyway, completely "inner" so that, as the author tells us in his diaries, nobody may even notice it (p. 219). He points out: "Das fremde Wesen muss dann in mir so deutlich und unsichtbar sein wie das Versteckte in einem Vexierbild, in dem man auch niemals etwas finden würde, wenn man nicht wüsste, dass es drin steckt" (September 30, 1911, p. 71). "The other being" — another man or an animal — in Kafka splits the author in two, both in his life and his work. In his work, we have all the various "picture puzzles" in which an animal occupies the central place but is obviously not the central theme: they contain, just like a "Vexierbild", another and more meaningful theme within themselves. Kafka's art is, once recognized as such, a penetrating light in darkness: it illuminates our whole world of human relations. But this light will only shine when it is struck by our light of understanding, just as figures and hands on wrist-watches will only tell the time

when exposed to light. In other words: one has to look for the human character in the "picture puzzle" of the vermin in such a story as "Die Verwandlung" in order to "know" what the author "means."

The vermin, in all his helplessness, attracts our sympathy, just as it attracted Kafka's. For him it was an outlet of his emotions and ideas. Constantly, while wondering about the author's intentions in his animal comparisons, we feel sorry for him, the poor dog of Milena, for him, the ugly, old vermin, the humiliated beast. Kafka's own sympathy was oriented in the same direction: toward the beast. To have "sym"pathy ("Mit"gefühl, "Mit"leid) with somebody or something is a strong hint inherent in the language on how we reach out for, and live and feel with, other beings; on how we identify ourselves with them in their sufferings and humiliations; on how we share their troubles in the underlying hope not to be alone when we are struck by misfortune. Sympathy, too, is an act of — moral — imitation. The more an individual suffers pain himself, as Kafka did both psychologically in relation to his family and social environment and physically in his illness, the more he is inclined to look around for comradeship in his distress. (18) Kafka actually transformed himself into, and identified himself with, the animal, the object of his sympathy, wishing for the sympathy of his object — perhaps even ours, for we know that the author despite his outward frigidity, his pride, and lonely heroism wanted to hear an echo of his cries of pain. He left his unpublished works for Max Brod to destroy — he did not destroy them himself and perhaps did not even want them destroyed, for he wanted an echo in us.

We, however, we modern adults, have lost, to a very great extent at least, the power to listen and echo. We have lost the sympathetic understanding of our environment in which the child and "primitive" man excel. Only in the artist, in a Kafka, have sympathetic understanding and imitation of, as well as identification with, objects around us — the animals — been preserved. It is the artist who exhibits fea-

tures which are typical of children and "primitive" man: Naiveté and spontaneity, and who defies conventionality, "common sense," and conformity. It is the child in the artist which makes him what he is. The child has the original "vision" and is closer to all the things in human environment. Kafka is the child among art's children. His "infantilism" (19) is another link in our chain of relations between the writer and the animal.

Kafka was not "adult" enough to look down upon the so-called "lower" creatures. He had a sincere awe of the beasts around us, and he considered himself essentially on the same level with them, very closely related — not through evolution, that poor man's religion, but through common destiny. His "holy innocence," his untroubled eye could not perceive any unbridgeable gulf between himself and the brute. When he humiliated himself by comparison with a dog or a mouse, then only by inversion: in the eyes of other persons, not in his own. In this respect, he was wholly — holy — "unmodern," "unscientific," "unrealistic." The animal was not created to be slaughtered, dissected, or exploited. In short, Kafka was the great naive child who was so much wiser than the adult because so much more intimate with nature.

Born in the city, Kafka was nevertheless — or consequently — always in love with nature and the animal in it. He cherished the natural, healthy "animal" outdoor life, and tried vegetarianism and nudism. Vegetarianism in particular with its religious aspects besides its medical ones (20) brings us another step closer to a solution of the animal "picture puzzle": The animal was in many ways sacred to our writer, and when he had to eat—kill—it then it was not without grave reflections upon its consequences.

In his ethical-religious radicalism and insistence on a "clean" life, Kafka was led close to despair in a world full of strife, corruption, and injustice. His high ideals brought about a state of mind which, experiencing crime all around him in peace and war, showed symptoms of a dangerous split. The idealistic infant Kafka in a world of degenerated

infantilism had necessarily to suffer. This was his individual *conditio sine qua non*. He was constantly aware of it. He tried to escape civilization and seek refuge in animal's nature, but was not strong enough to go around nude in a nudist colony. Despite his fascination for technical inventions, his nervous system revolted against technology and succumbed to bureaucratic pressures: he loved planes and wrote a newspaper article about one of the first flights, yet he had to put cotton in his ears because he could not stand noise. The speechless animal was more like himself than the noisy machine. He saw himself persecuted by his fellow men and attempted to retire into his mind — or the animal within it — but it was too fragile to shelter all of Kafka's complex personality. (21) He built himself a world within a world, created animals within man, but it could not last. He introverted, but death was right in the pit of his own mind. "Der Wunsch nach besinnungsloser Einsamkeit. Nur mir gegenübergestellt sein," he exclaimed (*Tagebücher*, July 1, 1913, p. 306). In the animals of his stories that is just what happened: they *are* his "unconscious" solitude in the very meaning of the word, they may even mean death. (22) Kafka separated himself completely from the outside, going inside where he "found" the animal. He continued, as an artist, to communicate with the world, but only like a mole from its burrow. Eventually, sick of a world for which he was not made, the burrow became his world and he the mole. The mole, we remember with a sense of surprise and terror, is as good as blind. Kafka, the seer, the writer of light and sight, decided to transform himself into the subterranean animal living in night and darkness. But even the ancient seers were not seldom blind, and Oedipus blinded himself as a form of punishment for inescapable guilt, a guilt which was also Kafka's.

Kafka's separation from the world was due to, and increased further, his obvious schizophrenic attacks. His references to possible, or existing, insanity are legion. (23) Here is a statement on a certain pathological "self-observation": "Wie fern sind mir zum Beispiel die Armmuskeln" (*Tage-*



*bücher*, February 21, 1911, p. 44). We are suddenly struck with the symptom of schizophrenia. Or: "Jetzt abend, nachdem ich von sechs Uhr früh an gelernt habe, bemerkte ich, wie meine linke Hand die rechte schon ein Weilchen lang aus Mitleid bei den Fingern umfasst hielt" (November 16, 1911, p. 162). (24) And then: "Er hat Durst und ist von der Quelle nur durch ein Gebüsch getrennt. Er ist aber zweigeteilt, ein Teil übersieht das Ganze, sieht, dass er hier steht und die Quelle daneben ist, ein zweiter Teil aber merkt nichts, hat höchstens eine Ahnung dessen, dass der erste Teil alles sieht. Da er aber nichts merkt, kann er nicht trinken" ("Er", vol. V, p. 286). The ego is split. Kafka, "he," the sheep in the mountains is lost and wishes to drink; the other Kafka, the other "he," the other sheep is not there, or is chasing after the lost one. Since the other "he," or sheep, knows little, if anything, of what the lost one knows, "he" must die of thirst. . .

In the animal, Kafka found a retreat, but no happiness. He gained a new body through schizophrenic "cell-proliferation," but did not lose his old mentality — half animal and half man, like the centaur, he dwelt in the mountains of his imagination. He was sick of mind and limb, yet of artistic "health." There grew a fission-fungus in him breaking him in two parts, each of which grew into a complete organism: man and animal. There is Kafka, the centaur, the great "Vexierbild."

iv.

This "fission-fungus," we must admit, was an effect and not a cause. Kafka's works were as little due to it alone as to his power of empirical observation, sympathetic imitation and identification, or to his creative infantilism alone. They must still be considered as means and mechanism of the author's writing — as a necessary condition, but not more. At the bottom we expect something else.

Why, we must ask, has Gregor Samsa, in "Die Verwandlung," been transformed into a vermin? Because Kafka, the writer, cherished animals? Because he was an able ob-



server and imitator? Because he considered himself but an animal of a somewhat "higher" species? Because he suffered of a compulsion neurosis to see himself in animal shape?

Let us have a closer look at the story of the metamorphosis. Gregor Samsa, the young salesman, has made good in business where his aging father has failed. This cannot last without a conflict between the two. In addition, Gregor is at the stage where he is ready to find a wife. (25) There is, then, the generation problem "father-son," the old split within the family with the mother torn between her husband and her son. This is the basic situation when Gregor Gregor wakes up to find himself split: physically he has become a vermin, mentally he has remained human. Looking at Kafka himself — Gregor Samsa alias Franz Kafka — we find the same constellation; the relations between his father and himself were badly strained, with the mother in the middle and the sisters as a group by itself. There is also a sister in Gregor's case hinting at his sexual maturity (and hers). In both the Kafka and Samsa household, we observe a great deal of tension; in fact, Gregor's father is even ready to give the vermin a deadly blow, and only when the vermin has finally died a "natural" death, is harmony restored: the father becomes happier and again successful in a new business position while the young daughter for whom Gregor had planned a new life is considered mature enough by her parents to get married. This is the strange and significant end of the story which began with an even stranger and more significant metamorphosis.

What is, then, its meaning? Gregor, alias Franz, can neither endure the relationship to his father nor the newly approaching problem of sexual relationship. (26) As a matter of fact, they are conflicting relationships; they are, with the mother image in the middle, the most conflicting relationships a young man can encounter. Thus in the metamorphosis — a result of suppressed conflicts and wishes — a form of escape is found. In the figure of the vermin, the young man is relieved of certain responsibilities toward himself and others. (27) The vermin is his own

product, a product of the Unconscious. It is a result of the estrangement of the son from the father-world including mother, sister (fiancée), and business position. For Kafka, the writer, it is a symbol of his will for isolation. The hostility and feeling of inferiority coupled with death-wishes directed toward his oppressor, the father, has thus found a modern artistic presentation. The age old father-son problem — and *father* standing for more than just the personal father, as we shall see — has been introduced anew into modern contemporary literature. *Oedipus* is created anew by every generation. The Oedipus complex is the motif of the metamorphosis of Kafka, of Gregor Samsa, of Georg Bendemann, of Raban. The great letter which Kafka wrote to his father — published in the volume *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande* (1953) — confirms our conclusions. "Mein Schreiben handelte von Dir," he said to his father (p. 203).

Kafka, stricken by the Oedipus complex, could never successfully overcome his feelings of inferiority and guilt. His negative attitude toward his father could find two outlets: homicide or suicide. Homicide, which he was incapable of committing, would be followed by an even stronger feeling of guilt; suicide only by posthumous social ostracism. Kafka, the author, chose the latter one: The metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa alias Franz Kafka alias Georg Bendemann into a vermin represents the introverted death-wish ending with a semi-suicide in the case of Gregor — after all, it is he who brought about the metamorphosis and consequent death —, with a direct suicide in the case of Georg who jumps to his death, and with an indirect suicide in the case of Franz Kafka himself who said to Max Brod, referring to his tuberculosis, that his head had made an appointment with his lungs behind his back. . . (28) He made his own mind responsible for his eventual mortal infection.

The Oedipus complex and the phenomenon of religion we find to be intimately related in the totemistic manifestations of "primitive" worship. Kafka, as we have seen, busied himself with an anthropological study on "primitive"

religion, on totemism in general and animal totemism in particular. Quite generally speaking, he was a thoroughly religious individual, yet like Kierkegaard, whom he considered on the same side of the fence, (29) he was a dissenter, and he repudiated the traditional Jewish faith as he saw it practised around him but took a genuine interest in his own non-orthodox Jewish studies; he even tried theosophy with Rudolf Steiner. In totemism Kafka must have found something which appealed to his unspoiled and "uncivilized" religious nature. Totemism means, most basically, that the members of a group of people assume the name of their totem animal from which, it is believed in metaphysical, pre-scientific fashion, they are descended. Consequently, they must not kill or eat it. During religious festivals, it is imitated. Already we see certain similarities between these totemistic factors and Kafka's animal allusions, his diet, and metamorphoses. With religious totemism go certain other elementary, unavoidable social rules, rules as old as mankind itself. (30) They are that incest with the mother or sister is taboo, and that incest on a larger scale as with the women of the individual's own group is prohibited. Of course, the father — the animal, the ancestor, God — must by no means be killed (except ritually). (31)

In Kafka's life, as well as in his works "Die Verwandlung," "Das Urteil," and "Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande," the females stand mainly for negation — a taboo — of sexual relations. They represent an arrested, or frustrated, sex life. Kafka's abhorrence of intercourse as a "punishment," his broken engagements, his constant failure in matters of the libido found outlets in his art. He loved his mother dearly but dreaded his father. In "Die Verwandlung," the mother is considerably closer to Gregor than the father, but she, like his sister — and his girl friend as well as the two fiancées in the two other works —, become "taboo" to him, indicating the prohibition of female relationships generally to a man who is, infant-like, dependent upon his father-image. With Gregor's metamorphosis into an animal his relationships to a hostile father whom he must

not kill but who wants to kill him, and to females "forbidden" by the father but "desired" by the son, become clear with one stroke. The animal-metamorphosis serves as a symbol that suddenly Gregor is strangely aware of this doubly impossible situation. To say that with the crippling change into a vermin (or into the blind Oedipian mole) Gregor's fear of castration is expressed, is to put it mildly, in psychoanalytical terms; it is an emasculation which carries all the symptoms of a final and definite solution: the metamorphosis is the beginning of the end, is death which dwelt in Gregor like the "seed of a fruit." (32) This death comes wholly from within and merely waited for the proper moment to turn inside out.

Animal metamorphoses in Kafka mean, on another level, that the mother element — both individual mother and mother earth — has turned man out of the protective womb and away from her love and expelled him, against her wish, into the insecurity of the hostile father world; and the father — the procreator and creator — who was responsible for the initial conceptual process has taken the role of lord, high priest, ruler, judge, official, or "conscience" dominating and presiding over that hostile world. (33) The male became God the Father, the son his worldly and inferior substitute.

In totemistic religion, the animal totem is the ancestor from which man was descended, the father on whom man depended, and God the Father in whom everything ended. Kafka made himself the animal, as did the "primitives" on certain occasions, and we remember here his quotation from Söderblom: "Die Menschen schufen selbst in der Urzeit die Totentiere durch Ausübung der Zeremonien. Die heiligen Riten brachten also selbst den Gegenstand, auf den sie gerichtet sind, hervor." (34) Yet, with the animal always in Kafka, his was an inverted, introverted, intellectualized totemism.

The split into the centaur, the "picture puzzle," this radical isolation in, and identification with, the animal, means in the end, beyond psychoanalytical and anthropological interpretation, a return to the core of our existence, a return

to the father and hence to God the Father in us, in whom all originates. To God we come only through the stages of isolation and death. Kafka confessed: "Dem Tod also würde ich mich anvertrauen. Rest eines Glaubens. Rückkehr zum Vater. Grosser Versöhnungstag" (*Tagebücher*, September 28, 1917, p. 534). In this association of death, faith, return to the father and God the Father, the great Day of Reconciliation, the great Day of Atonement, the great Day of Reunion has been strangely anticipated. The Jewish festival of atonement (also Christian) has reminded Kafka, perhaps while visiting the temple, of a remainder of faith in him. But he could not be absolved from his sin in any temporal way. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the original sin is an offense against God the Father. "And if Christ redeems mankind from the weight of original sin by sacrificing his own life, he forces us to the conclusion that this sin was murder," Freud states solemnly. (35) This murder was the killing, in mythological terms, of Laius, the father of Oedipus; it was, on a more "primitive" level, the killing of the divine animal totem, the ancestor-father-God; it was also the slaying of Abel who was in the grace of God, by Cain who was not. (36) Kafka's feeling of guilt originated in his relation to his father, with all its subsequent tragedies. Free death may mean redemption, and the writer's personal death and suicide wishes, which were many, (37) point in this direction. They were not neurotic symptoms in themselves, nor were his literary metamorphoses. Kafka's longing for rest is a desire for peace in the non-consciousness, in Nature, in God the Father. It is a wish for eternal and paternal, not temporary female, love. Kafka left the pale of the Jewish Church — the lap of the mother — (38) to find his own spiritual freedom; but, as he said in his greatest work, *Das Schloss*, there was nothing more meaningless than this freedom, and thus he returned on his own

account to what was superior to church and mother: God and Father, creator of both. (39)

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#### FOOTNOTES

1. See "Franz Kafka: An American Bibliography," by Klaus W. Jonas (*Bulletin of Bibliography*, Sept.-April, 1952-1953); *Frank Kafka, A Chronology and Bibliography*, by Angel Flores (Bern Porter; Haul-ton, Maine, 1944); and *The Kafka Problem*, edited by Angel Flores (New York, New Directions, 1946), with 41 essays.

2. Quotations are from *Franz Kafka, Gesammelte Werke*, edited by Max Brod (New York, Schocken Books, Vol. I-X, various years).

3. *Tagebücher*, p. 500 (1948).

4. Anthropologically, religion is really never "primitive" and has found very highly cultivated manifestations among the tribes of Australia, Africa, etc. It is important to note that Kafka's allusion to "primitive" religion, or our interpretations of him in the light of "primitive" religion, should not be misunderstood as in any way "primitive", or derogatory, in character, but rather as an inclination on the part of Kafka toward a more genuine and original religious life. Paul Goodman who refers briefly to totemism in his introduction to *Die Verwandlung* (New York; The Vanguard Press, 1946) says in this respect: "It can be said without paradox that this theologian Kafka who in the spiritual spheres of a Kierkegaard was, I would argue, ultimately agnostic, was, nevertheless, a believer in the totemic religion of the primitive hordes. It is a truer religion." (*Kafka's Prayer*, New York; The Vanguard Press, 1947, p. 262).

5. See Max Brod's various "Nachworte" and his book *Franz Kafka, A Biography* (New York; Schocken Books, 1947); Charles Neider is the author of the study *The Frozen Sea* (New York; Oxford University Press, 1948); for Burgam's and Kelly's contributions, see *The Kafka Problem*, pp. 298-318, and pp. 151-171.

6. In an eventual conclusive interpretation of Kafka it will, of course, be necessary to deal with this great writer on all four possible levels: the psychic level where many of the motifs have originated; the societal from which the fictional material has been taken, or the anthropological from which the animal theme has been borrowed; the theological which has given the work of Kafka its end purpose; and the artistic which is an end in itself. So far, Max Brod has issued only very general hints as to the meaning of Kafka's novels ("grace", etc.). The psychoanalysts have dwelt exclusively, though with great merit,



on the subjective significance of all major details. The simply social interpretations have fallen short most conspicuously. And the writers emphasizing the merely artistic point of view have apparently neglected all that is "behind" the literary word, which is much.

7. *Tagebücher*, p. 501. Here are, for comparison, the passages directly from Söderblom (here the second edition of 1926 is used; translated, like the first of 1915, by the Leipzig anthropologist Prof. Dr. R. Stübe; Leipzig; Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. The sub-title is: *Untersuchungen über die Anfänge der Religion*): "Dort wird erzählt, wie Eng-ai . . . Vieh vom Himmel an einem Lederriemen in den ersten Krall herunterliess" (p. 93). "Er wird also ein mächtiger Medizinnmann geschildert, der einst vom Westen kam, Menschen, Tiere, Bäume, Flussläufe, Gebirge machte, die heiligen Zeremonien einsetzte und bestimmte, aus welchem Klan ein Mitglied eines bestimmten anderen Klans sein Weib nehmen sollte, d.h. die festen Eheregeln einführte. Als er dort alles fertig gebracht hatte, ging er davon. Die Medizinnmänner können an einem Baum oder Seil zu ihm hinaufsteigen und Kraft holen" (p. 94). "Auch Hügel, die aus der Ebene ragen, Baumstümpfe und alles, dessen Ursprung überhaupt einer Erklärung bedarf, sind von diesen Wesen [Vorfahren oder Urväter der Totemklane] verfertigt, die auch hier und da während ihren Wanderungen die heiligen Tänze und Riten zum ersten Mal ausführten" (p. 95). "Nach den Unmatjera schufen die Menschen selbst in der Urzeit die Totemtiere durch die Ausübung von Zeremonien. . . Die heiligen Riten brachten also selbst den Gegenstand, auf den sie sich richten: das Totemgeschlecht hervor. Die Parallele ist wertvoll. Keine 'Urheber' im eigentlichen Sinn treten auf, die alten Menschen waren selbst ohne Unterschied Urheber [Götter]" (p. 95). "Die Bimbinga, nahe der Küste, kennen zwei Männer, welche in der Urzeit auf ihren Wanderungen Quellen, Waldungen und Zeremonien schufen" (p. 96). For further influences of Söderblom on Kafka, see also *Tagebücher*, p. 505 (sketch on negroes and ritual dance).

8. Alexander appears also in other stories in which Kafka made use of his classical education, to which we shall have opportunity to refer later with regard to Oedipus. Alexander the Great, incidentally, was famous for his belief in dreams and dream interpretations, a fact which Freud mentions in his *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (New York, 1938, pp. 77, 211). Kafka, as we know from his diaries, saw great significance in his dreams and often wrote them down. In fact, his whole work has occasionally been referred to as a dream, and many of his works and passages in his works can well be interpreted by psychoanalytical dream technique.

9. *Briefe an Milena*, edited by Willy Haas (New York, Schocken Books, 1952).



10. For flagellations, see also *Der Prozess*, Chapter V ("Der Prügler"), and "In der Strafkolonie."
11. Speaking of animal symbols, the name Kafka, or Kavka, means in Czech "jackdaw", and the jackdaw was used as an emblem at Franz Kafka's father's store in Prague, always pointing out to young Kafka the symbolic significance of names and animals. As far as the abundant name-symbolism in the writer's work is concerned — and I venture to say that there is hardly any name in Kafka's creations which does not have a special meaning — a few examples related to our subject will suffice. The man in "Hochzeitsvorbereitungen" who wishes to be a bug is called Raban which reminds us of the German "Rabe" ("raven") or, by association, of "Dohle" ("jackdaw"). Raban, like Samsa in "Die Verwandlung" or Kalda in "Erinnerungen an die Kaldabahn," has as many letters as Kafka; they all have the same a-vowel twice and three consonants in addition. In his diary, Kafka says: "Georg [in "Das Urteil"] hat so viel Buchstaben wie Franz. . . Bende [of Bendemann] aber hat ebenso viele Buchstaben wie Kafka und der Vokal e wiederholt sich an den gleichen Stellen wie der Vokal a in Kafka" (February 11, 1913, p. 297). Gregor (Samsa) sounds like a variation of Georg (Bendemann). All these phenomena point significantly to the "autobiographical" or "confessional" quality of Kafka's work.
12. Very often, especially however in the case of "Ein Landarzt", one is reminded of the horse motif and horse symbolism in *Der tote Tag* by the symbolist Ernst Barlach who wrote the play in 1912. — Other symbolic works by Kafka are: "Forschungen eines Hundes," "Der Geier," "Josephine, Die Sängerin, oder das Volk der Mäuse," "Ein Bericht für eine Akademie," "Schakale und Araber," "Eine Kreuzung," "Kleine Fabel," etc.
13. The association "Spinne"-*"Trauernder"* is not surprising for anyone who is acquainted with German proverbs ("Spinne am Morgen, bringt Kummer und Sorgen;" the fact that originally "Spinne" is not "spider" but "spinning," is immaterial here).
14. The directly preceding as well as following remarks, by the way, with their references to insomnia, head-aches, cold, dullness, bad nerves, absentmindedness, inability to work, etc. make perfect parallels to the constant complaints of Nietzsche.
15. All these quotations could be easily continued. Cp. "Blumenfeld, ein älterer Junggeselle," *Der Prozess* (the cat), the snake in the story of the "Great Madame" (*Tagebücher*, August 4, 1917, pp. 525-526) and the snake-allusions in *Das Schloss* (1946, p. 30), rats in "Erinnerung an die Kaldabahn" und "Der Nachbar", a sparrow in the Milena letters (p. 75), the stories "Der Schlag ans Hoftor," "Zum Nachdenken für Herrenreiter," and the sketch "Fürsprecher," etc., etc.
16. Apart from observing intently the outside, Kafka felt an "Unent-

rinnbare Verpflichtung zur Selbstbeobachtung" (*Tagebücher*, November 7, 1921, p. 550).

17. "dass in meinem Innern gar kein Platz bleibt, diese Nachahmung zu beobachten und zu konstatieren, sondern dass ich sie erst in der Erinnerung vorfinde. Hier ist aber auch die Nachahmung so vollkommen und ersetzt mit einem Sprung und Fall mich selbst, dass sie auf der Bühne, unter der Voraussetzung, dass sie überhaupt augenscheinlich gemacht werden könnte, unerträglich wäre" (December 30, 1911, p. 219).

18. We have a remarkable proof of Kafka's interest in the workings of the Unconscious and of primitive religion, in relation to pain, and a fine hint as to his own "primitive religion" in his diary: "Mit primitivem Blick gesehen, ist die eigentliche, unwidersprechliche, durch nichts ausserhalb . . . gestörte Wahrheit nur der körperliche Schmerz. Merkwürdig, dass nicht der Gott des Schmerzes der Hauptgott der ersten Religionen war (sondern vielleicht erst der späteren). Jedem Kranken sein Hausgott, dem Lungenkranken der Gott des Erstickens. Wie kann man sein Herankommen ertragen, wenn man nicht an ihm Anteil hat noch vor der schrecklichen Vereinigung?" (February 1, 1922, p. 569).

19. Cp. Max Brod's "Infantilismus Kleist und Kafka," in *Literarische Welt*, July 15, 1927 (quoted from Angel Flores, *A Chronology and Bibliography*). See also Kafka's *Tagebücher* (January 24, 1922, p. 561) where the author refers to his "childish" behavior.

20. Kafka was probably aware early in his life of the phenomenon of "unclean" meat through his Jewish upbringing.

21. Goodman says Kafka was in a state of "persecutory paranoia."

22. See also *Tagebücher*, pp. 311, 317 ("Ich werde mich bis zur Besinnungslosigkeit von allen absperren. Mit allen mich verfeinden, mit niemandem reden"), 552, etc.

23. *Tagebücher*, pp. 311, 450, 484, 553, 558, 570; "Er", vol. V, p. 280, etc.

24. One is vividly reminded of a similar experience which R. M. Rilke records in *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* when he speaks of his early youth.

25. An expression of this is the symbolism inherent in the frame and paper clipping (a picture of a woman) motif in the very beginning of Chapter I as well as toward the end of Chapter II; the indication of Gregor's attempted engagement to the cashier in Chapter III; and the window motif throughout, which is an accepted female symbol.

26. Cp. the same motifs in "Das Urteil": the quarrel over the business, over the fiancée, the mother; and the father even condemns Georg to drown himself. As far as Gregor's, Georg's, and Raban's libido problems are concerned, we have Kafka's own admission that he considered "coitus as a punishment for the happiness of being together." Perhaps the most important single statement ever made by Kafka

on both his libido problems and his work, and which is also the most important single clue to much of his writing is what he said to Max Brod about the ending of "Das Urteil." The last two sentences of this story when Georg is about to jump from the bridge in order to execute his father's suicide order are: "Noch hielt er sich mit schwacher werdenden Händen fest, erspähte zwischen den Geländerstangen einen Autoomnibus, der mit Leichtigkeit seinen Fall übertönen würde, rief leise: 'Liebe Eltern, ich habe euch doch immer geliebt', und liess sich hinabfallen. In diesem Augenblick ging über die Brücke ein geradezu unendlicher Verkehr." Max Brod recalls Kafka's words thus: "He told me, in fact, and to the best of my recollection, more or less in so many words, 'Do you know what the last sentence means? When I wrote it, I had in mind a violent ejaculation.' " (Biography, p. 129).

27. Cp. "Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande."

28. Brod's Biography, p. 76.—For Gregor's semi-suicide cp. the line (in the beginning of Chapter III of the story), "Seine [Gregor's] Meinung darüber, dass er verschwinden müsse, war womöglich noch entschiedener als die seiner Schwester." Many modern heroes struck with the generation problem choose patricide (or parricide) rather than suicide, e.g. in Hasenclever's *Der Sohn* (1913), Werfel's *Nicht der Mörder, der Ermordete ist schuldig* (1915), Bronnen's *Vatermord* (1920), and in the works of L. Frank, F. v. Unruh, H. Ungar and other Germans. Cp. Félix Bertaux, *A Panorama of German Literature* (New York, 1935), pp. 211-231.

29. *Tagebücher*, August 21, 1913, p. 318.

30. Totemism, to be sure, is not confined to just certain "primitive" aboriginal races in Australia etc.; it is assumed that the Indo-European, Semitic and other widespread cultures also practised it at one time, to which fact certain totemistic remnants in our contemporary culture point. There are, in our everyday life, the mascots, talismans, and zodiacal animals of our superstitions; there are the animals in our symbolic speech, in heraldic signs, on flags, emblems, coins, and rings; and there are the animals in our curse words and flatteries, when we identify our enemies with "rats" or "lice," and our friends with "doves" or "kittens."

31. For totemism, cp. Sigmund Freud, *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud* (New York, The Modern Library, 1938), Book V. Freud chose for his study the aborigines of Australia just like Söderblom (and e.g. Durkheim, mentioned by Söderblom frequently) who mentions totemism, in addition to those passages quoted above, on pp. 80, 86, 101, etc. See also the works of J. G. Frazer and others.

32. A fitting phrase taken from Rilke's *Malte Laurids Brigge*.

33. Cp. the two late novels for these terms.

34. Söderblom continued (see footnote 7), "die alten Menschen waren selbst ohne Unterschied Urheber."

35. Freud, *Basic Writings*, op. cit., p. 924.

36. Cp. the interesting note by Goodman on the relationship, on the one hand, between Kafka and his two brothers who died early in their infancy, and, on the other hand, the relationship between the heroes in the two late novels and the two couples of guards and assistants. Goodman holds that Kafka's thoughts of his two dead brothers might have been troubled by, what I should like to call, a "Cain complex."

37. See *Das Schloss*, p. 165; *Der Prozess*, pp. 18, 238; *Tagebücher*, pp. 137, 275, 306, 313, 316, 336, 360, 361, 416, 554; *Briefe an Milena*, pp. 209, 225. In *Tagebücher*, see p. 325 for the romanian idea of love-death unity.

38. The German expressions "Schoss der Kirche," "Schoss der Mutter," "Schoss der Erde," are even more suggestive in their association of "lap," "origin," and "pale."

39. This article is a slightly revised reprint of a contribution to *Literature and Psychology* (Vol. IV, September, 1954, No. 4), with permission by the editor.